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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

579 - $\frac{1}{12}$

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XL.

FROM JANUARY 22, 1887, TO JULY 9, 1887.

Including No. 947 to No. 971.

60

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT 26, WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

1887.

~~VIII. 105~~
P212.4.3



Lowell Fund

CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE, LONDON,
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	PAGE
Gretchen, A Serial Story by " Rita." 3, 26, 49, 73, 97, 131, 145, 169, 193, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 481, 505, 529, 553,	577
Guillemot Bird	236
Gulls	235
Guns and Keiths, Fight be- tween	254
HARLECH CASTLE	500
Harmony	398
Hawarden Castle	541
Heavens, Photographs of the . .	230
Hebrides, The	425
Highlands—The Exodus	155
Hindoo Widows	343
Honeymoon, The	271
Holy Island	378
Houses	461
How Canaries came to Saint Andreasberg	90
How I struck Oil. A Story. 164, Hyères	189 180
IF YOU WANT TO DO ANYTHING WELL YOU MUST DO IT YOUR- SELF	189
Indian Marriages	205, 320
Inverloch Castle	164
Inverness	150
Isle of Arran	378
Italian Winter Resorts	256
JACOBITE CAUSE IN THE HIGH- LANDS	155
Japanese Weddings	272
Jerry Builders	461
June, The Month of	494
KANAKA ROYAL FAMILY	273
Kempton Park	590
Kidnapping for the Plantations .	59
Kidrummie Castle	59
King's Evil, Touching for	513
Knights of the Wheel	34
Kissing	203
Kissing the Bride	270
LADY OF SEAFORTH	199
Lamp Oil	250
Lechlade	283
Legal and Criminal Curiousities .	541
Legs	328
Leslies and Sesters	65
Lennox, The House of	381
Limeboat Work	394
Limehouse, Petroleum Wharf . .	252
Lindseys and Gordons, Fights between	6
Literary Career, A	101
Loch Awe	303
Loch Lomond	475
Loch Maree	203
London Bridge (Old), A Com- bat on	6
London Fire Brigade	291
Long Reckoning, A	309, 332, 356
Loo-Choo Islands, The	687
Loreto and Recanatì	157
Lovat, The Lords	152
MACKENZIES, THE	202
Mackerel Fleet	206
Madeira of the East, The	537
Making a Name	185
Manure, Bones for	417
Mar, The Earl of	54
Marriage, Folk Lore of	288, 292, 320, 341
Marston, The Duchess of	68
McClellan, General	222
Merioneth	330
Milky Way, Photograph of the .	270

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Monte Carlo	185	Raisins	136	Swedish Marriages	294
Months of the Year, The	484	Redcliffe, Saint Mary	60	Sutherland	257
Montrose and Argyle	154	Refuges for Spring	258		
Moon, Photographs of the	230	Riviera Country	258	TAMBA. A Queensland Bush	
Morganatic Marriages	260	Robertson, James	200	Idyl	468
Mormons, The	323	Rob Roy	202	Tansy Cakes	81
Musical Medley, A	398	Ross and Cromarty	197	Tay Bridge, Destruction of	10
My Friend Crocker	447	Roughing it on the Lomonds	475	"Tear Kerchief," The	272
My Poor Little Story. A Story 12, 36		Run to Sandringham	83	Tea Tattle	415
		Russia, Marriage in	297, 342	Teignmouth and Torquay	259
NAIRN	112			Tewkesbury	281
Names, Changing	185	SANCTUARY, THE RIGHT OF	200	Thames and Severn Canal	222
Name, The Importance of	185	Sandringham, A Visit to	82	Tiger Karl, The	6
New Guinea, Marriage in	321	Sandwich Islands, The	273	Tornadoes	347
Nice	185	San Raphael	183	Tour from Stratford to London	278
Nicknames	189	Santa Casa, The	559	Travelling à l'Omnibus	180
Night with the Mackerel Fleet 206		Scotch Marriage, A	269	Tricycling	34
		Scotch Petroleum	249	Turkestan Marriages	521
Oil City	249	Seal-Killing	232	Turkish Marriage	298
Oil, Petroleum	248	Sea Lion, The	232	Twelfth Cakes	80
Oil Wells in England	248	Sea, Night at, in a Fishing Boat	205		
Old English Marriages	323	Seaton and Sidmouth	259	UNCLE BOB'S NINCE. A Serial	
Old "R. A.," The. A Story 260, 284		Seatons and Leslies	55	Story by Leslie Keith, 354,	
On the Ice	31	Self-perception of Greatness	162	381, 404, 428, 451, 477, 501, 526,	
Oranges and Lemons	135	Seventeenth Century Anais	201	548, 573, 592	
Our Aviary	114	Shadows	215	Urquhart, Sir Thomas	198
Our Convent	873	Shepherd of the Salt Lake. A			
Orange Blossoms at Weddings	269	Story	99, 93, 117	VALENTINES, Origin of	86
Organ Music	399	Shetland Islands	421	Vancouver	275
Orkney and Shetland Islands	421	Siberia, Marriage in	321, 342	Veils at Weddings	259
Osculation		Sinclair, Sir John	250	Venice, Marriage in	293
		Skating in London	33	Vienna, Passion Week in	344
PANCAKES	80	Skye, The Isle of	155	Vitrified Forts of Scotland	198
Panics	173	Slaves	157		
Paracelus	128	Slipper-Throwing at Weddings	270	WALRUS, THE	233
Part Singing	408	Soldier's Funeral in Belgium	17	War in America, The	222
Passion Week in Vienna	344	Some Confessions, Literary and		Wedding Presents	271
Persecution of Quakers	173	Otherwise	101	Well Sinking	250
Persian Marriages	206	South African Sketches	568	Welsh Wedding	272
Petroleum	248	Spring Flowers	325	What's in a Name?	185
Photography: Map of the		Stars, Maps of the	229	Whist, The Game of	67
Heavens	229	St. Andreasberg, Canaries at	90	Winter Resorts	258
Pin Money	271	St. Duthac	200	Witch Burning at Aberdeen	56
Piquet, The Game of	66	St. Mary Redcliffe, Church of	60	Wolfe, General, at Inverness	151
Pirates in the China Seas	137	St. Paul and St. George Islands	236	Wooden Horse Riding	324
Plum Pudding	82	St. Valentine's Day	85	York Buildings Company	805
Polygamy	322	Stories:			
Pope Joan, The Game	66	Eliza	490, 516	POETRY.	
Predictions	248	Fate or Chance?	211, 236	Anemones	468
Presents at Weddings	271	From Her High Estate	564, 583	Canary, The	93
Pretender at Aberdeen, Tho	16	How I Struck Oil	184, 189	Compensation	351
Fribylov Islands, The	232	Long Reckoning, A	309, 332, 351	Forth	278
Primero, The Game	66	Mrs. Elias B. Bunthorp	365, 389	Going	60
Prince Charles and Aberdeen	87	My Poor Little Story	12, 36	Herons' Pool	398
Prince of Wales at Sandringham	82	Old "R. A.," The	260, 281	Only a Week	133
Profession of Literature, The	101	Shepherd of the Salt Lake	60, 93, 117	Parvula	85
QUAKERS, THE	174	Tamba. A Queensland Bush		Primroses	563
Queen of the Sandwich Islands	275	Idyl	468	Sculptor's Story	496
		Strange Creatures	332	St. Valentine	89
RACECOURSES ABOUT LONDON—		Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord	61	That Day in June	447
Epsom	442	Stratford to London by Water	278	Welcome, A	155
Kenpton Park	580	Summer Isles, The	200	We Two	206

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1886,

AND

THE EXTRA SPRING NUMBER FOR 1887,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 947. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

*By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Consett,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.*

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

I AM NOT WANTED BY ANYBODY.

"LISSCHEN, Liaschen! Are you asleep, Lisschen?"

There was no answer. The wind rustled softly among murmuring leaves. Here and there a bird twittered lazily in the dreamy noontide hush. That was all—that, and the sound of placid breathing here in the heart of the dark, deep woods that clothed the pretty heights around Neu-Waldegg.

That little village, and its sister Dornbach, were quite shut out from sight. Trees, tall and short, old and young, large and slender, grew close and thick along the sloping hills and level park-lands; trees that were clothed now in the rich and lovely leafage of spring, and shut out the hot sun with depths of cool, dim shadow.

A little stream ran swiftly under a tiny, toy-like bridge—a little span of shallow water, that caught the sunbeams' radiance through swaying boughs, and in which the little children came to bathe their bare brown limbs, and by whose banks the old wood-gatherers sat to rest and chatter. But even the little stream was quiet to-day; its lulling song was subdued. The drowsy hush of the hour seemed to have cast its spell over everything, save those bright, girlish eyes, wandering from place to place, and glancing with comical dissatisfaction at the sleeping figure on the grassy bank beside her.

Yes, Liaschen was asleep. She had fallen under the spell to which the birds, and the

butterflies, and the shallow, murmuring waters, had succumbed.

Her knitting had fallen from her hand; her head lay back against the soft turf. The grim, hard-featured face had lost something of its grimness and hardness, for Sleep, like its twin-sister, Death, has a marvellous way of smoothing out the lines and creases of the human visage, and bestowing upon it that serenity and quiet content which give a kind of beauty to even the homeliest or the most forlorn.

"Poor old Lisschen!" the girl murmured softly, "she doesn't look so cross when she is asleep. I wonder if she was always cross, even when she was young. Fancy Liaschen ever being young, though! I can't imagine it. Her face is as gnarled, and brown, and wrinkled as an old tree stem, and her hands look like leather. It doesn't seem possible that she could ever have been pleasant and fair, like the girls one sees. Now, I wonder how long she intends to sleep!"

She clasped her hands behind her head—such a pretty uncovered head it was—and leant back lazily, looking up through the green boughs to where the haze of sunshine burnt in the sky, watching the filmy clouds as they crossed it in a soft, slow measure, from space to space of the blue width of heaven.

"It is stupid lying idle here and doing nothing," she went on. "I have half a mind to wake Lisschen and make her talk, only she'll be so cross."

"Don't wake her, then," murmured a voice near by—a lazy, pleasant voice, with just a little uncertainty in its accent that seemed to give a distinct charm to the guttural German. "Don't wake her; come up here and talk to me."

The girl did not start, unexpected as was the intrusion; she only unclasped her

hands, and turned her head in the direction of the speaker. Doing so she caught the outline of a figure stretched on the grass a few yards off, and rather above the level of her own resting-place.

"Are you coming?" resumed the voice a little plaintively. "I can't see you; I am blind."

The girl rose to her feet with a slow, uncertain grace, and looked up curiously at the speaker.

The figure told her nothing, except that a man was lying on the bank, his face almost hidden, and the upper part bound by a black silk handkerchief. Some vague sense of pity and curiosity stole across her heart. She did not speak, but went slowly up the slope and stood before the stranger.

"Was I talking aloud?" she asked him softly. "I did not know."

The recumbent figure raised itself at sound of her voice. She saw then that the smooth face and finely moulded chin, and down-shaded upper lip, bespoke youth, and the sight of the disfiguring bandage touched her heart with new compassion.

"And are you really blind?" she asked. "And all alone? Are you not afraid of losing yourself in the woods?"

A smile curved the handsome mouth under shade of the fair, faint moustache.

"I expect my servant back presently," he said. "He only went down to the Restauration. I, too, fell asleep like—Lisschen. By the way, who is Lisschen?"

"Hush," said the girl softly. "You will wake her, and then she will be cross. She is almost always cross."

"What an extremely pleasant old person!" he answered, lowering his voice though, at the girl's hint. "I will try and not wake her, as you give her so bad a character. I presume she is old and—otherwise estimable. Is she your nurse?"

"Nurse!" the girl laughed softly. "Oh, no. I am not so young as all that. In fact, I am quite grown up. I shall soon be sixteen. Oh, no! Lisschen is our servant. She is quite old; she was old when I was a baby. She came here with me from Dornbach to-day. I live there."

"So," he said tranquilly. "I, too, live at Dornbach—for the present. I came to Vienna for advice about my eyes. They are getting better at last. But the city was so hot I really could not bear it, so I have taken rooms at Dornbach for a month. By that time I hope my sight will be quite restored; the oculist believes now that it will."

"How glad you will be!" she said softly. "It must be terrible not to see. Fancy life without the sky and the sun, and all the beautiful things of earth. I think I would rather die."

"I thought so, too," he said gloomily. "At first, when they said there was hope, I dared not believe them. I have suffered greatly both in body and mind."

"You are not—German?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Oh, no! I am English. I was at school in Bonn for many years; that is how I learnt the language. Then I went home and passed for the army."

"You are a soldier, then?"

"Yes. But I wish you would sit down; you have been standing all this time."

"How do you know that?" she questioned. "You cannot see."

A faint smile quivered over the young man's mouth.

"Have you never heard, Fräulein, that when a man loses one sense, Nature kindly strives to atone for that loss by sharpening those that are left? The sound of your voice tells me you are standing up."

She seated herself on the bank. The sunbeams were playing at hide-and-seek among the boughs. Below them, with her head comfortably pillowed on the soft turf, the old serving-woman slept placidly on. Now and then through the close ranks of the trees could be seen the bent figure or fluttering petticoats of a wood-picker, with her bundle of sticks on her back.

It was dusky as evening under this green shade, and sometimes through the fern and bracken a rabbit peeped, or a bird rustled its wings for flight.

"Do you know," said the girl, suddenly breaking the silence, "I have never been to Wien, though I live so near."

"That is strange," he answered. "Why don't your parents take you?"

"I have none," she said sadly. "I live with my grandfather and aunt. I remember nothing of my parents. They are angry at home when I speak of them. Lisschen says my mother was foolish and offended grandfather, and he has never forgiven her. She died, and left me a little baby. Aunt brought me home—here, and I have lived here ever since. That is all my history."

"And your father. Did he die also?"

"Yes. That is all they have ever told me of him."

"Are they old people—these relations of yours?"

"Grandfather is old, but aunt is not, and she is beautiful still—but Lisschen says my mother was more beautiful. They were twin sisters, and so very, very fond of one another. Sometimes I wonder why, if she loved my mother so dearly, she cannot love me a little. But I know she does not. She is very, very good, so is grandfather. They are always going to church, and they give so much to the priests. The priests come very often to our house; no one else comes. But this will not interest you. I forget—I have so seldom anyone to speak to, or who cares to hear me speak."

There was such a ring of pathos in the clear young voice, that it touched her auditor deeply.

"Indeed, I am much interested," he said. "Pray tell me all about yourself. I too am very lonely. I have no one to care about me very nearly, except an uncle. My parents died when I was a child. You see, there is a bond of sympathy between us already."

"Well," said the girl, dropping her voice to even softer tones, "perhaps, then, you can understand something of what I feel—not so much, of course, for you are a man, and men are so different. They have things to fill their life and interest them, and take their thoughts away from just—themselves. We haven't. Even aunt says that, and I—how can I explain?—you can't understand what it is to seem in everyone's way; not to be wanted or cared for, or needed by any living soul. I have been like that always—always. I often wonder why it is. Do you think you could tell me?"

"I certainly cannot," he answered gravely. "Because I can't imagine that a girl who is fair, and young, and innocent, and charming—as you must be—can fail to win love wherever she brings the sunshine of her presence."

"That," she said gravely, "is very pretty and very kind of you to say, but then you have never seen me, and you do not know me; you cannot, therefore, judge. I must be disagreeable or repulsive, because if I were not they would be kinder, or care for me more. I have grown weary of trying to make them love me. The priest always says to me, 'Patience, my child, patience, it will all come round in Heaven's good time.' But I think," she added dearly, "that it is Heaven's long time."

"Poor child!" said the sympathising voice beside her.

She glanced quickly at him, and then went on, her little, slender hands, plucking nervously at the daisies which grew amongst the blades of grass.

"I think, often and often, that my mere presence makes them unhappy; it recalls something—I don't know what, and no one has ever told me. If they seem inclined to be kinder, a word, or look, or action of mine will recall this shadow, and they freeze back again, and I feel once more that I am put aside out of their hearts like a criminal, or an alien."

"My dear child!" cried the young man, startled and perplexed, for there was a sound as of tears in her voice, "you are surely too sensitive; your guardians can't mean to be unkind. Perhaps you fancy —"

"Fancy," she interposed with sudden passion. "Oh no, it is no fancy, it is a feeling that has grown up with me from my childhood; it has been in my heart always—always. And now Lisschen says they wish me to enter a convent. The priests counsel it, and there seems nothing else to do with my life. Well, I am not wanted by anybody; perhaps God will let me do something for him."

She spoke so simply, with such childlike frankness, that the young man's heart was deeply touched. For a moment he was silent. His right hand was nervously fidgeting with the bandage that covered his eyes; curiosity was getting the better of prudence. He felt as if he must gain one look at the face belonging to that lovely, sad young voice.

She had forgotten his presence for a time; she was so used to being alone, and to speaking out her thoughts. When with a faint sigh she turned her head at last and looked, she was bewildered at finding two sunny blue eyes intently observing her. There was certainly no trace of blindness or weakness about them.

"You—you can see!" she cried impulsively.

"Yes; Heaven be thanked!" said the young Englishman energetically. "I was told I might only remove the bandage in a dark room; but for the first time I have disobeyed orders. I am amply rewarded," he added calmly, as he once more replaced the handkerchief. "Forgive me, but may I ask your name?"

"My name," she said, and looked down at the daisies in her lap which her restless fingers were weaving into a garland. "They call me—Gretchen."

"Gretchen," he said. "It is a pretty name."

He was thinking of the picture he had seen, which he thought he should never forget—the picture of a slender girlish figure in a simple gray linen dress, with a face as fresh and innocent and fair as the spring itself, with a wealth of gold brown hair that fell in one long heavy plait to her waist, and two lovely dark-lashed eyes of deepest violet that for a moment had flashed their startled wonder on his own.

Gretchen! an ill-omened name. He thought of it, and grew silent. Lonely—unloved—and with such a face! Amidst all the beauty of earth and sky—that delicious dreamful enjoyment which had made the repose and shadow of the wood so pleasant, a feeling of vague dissatisfaction crept. He was almost sorry he had seen her.

Meanwhile she rose from her seat and addressed him in somewhat dignified accents. "I—I think you should not have told me you were blind, if you are not," she said gently. "I felt so sorry for you, and I came to talk to you, and all the time you can see as well as I can."

"Indeed," he cried eagerly, "I told you the truth, and I removed the bandage at a great risk. I could not resist the temptation. I so wished to see to whom I owed this pleasant half-hour."

The girl stood there silent. The colour came and went in her face. She was embarrassed, and yet pleased. There was no awkwardness or constraint about her—only a certain little pathetic air of wounded pride and perplexity that made her infinitely charming.

"Are you going?" he asked quickly, as she made a movement. "Don't; it would be a pity to wake Lisschen. Tell me some more about yourself. Do you—do you really like the idea of going into a convent?"

"I have always been brought up to look on it as the best and highest life," she said slowly. "It would be wrong to rebel."

"That," he said, "is begging the question. You don't like it. Who can wonder? I suppose," he added irrelevantly, after a short pause, "you can't speak anything but German?"

"No," she said. "I wanted much to learn English, but aunt was quite angry that I should."

"And I," he said, "speak German so badly. I want to express myself quite differently to what I do."

"Oh," she said composedly; "you ex-

press yourself very well. I have understood all you said."

"And can you tell me," he asked, "why your amiable relatives dislike my language?"

"It is not," she answered, "the language only, but your nation—your people altogether—grandfather hates the very name—English."

"But why?" he asked again.

"That I cannot tell—I only know they would not speak to an Englishman, or Englishwoman, if they could help it. No doubt they will be very angry when I tell them I have been speaking to you for so long."

"But why need you tell them?" he asked.

It was the first intrusion of the serpent into the innocence of Eden; the first shadow of doubt thrown across a mind that held still the crystal clearness of childhood.

"Why?" she echoed, and looked at him and then away to the sleeping form of Lisschen. "I never asked myself the reason, but I always tell them everything. They bade me do so."

The very simplicity of the answer rebuked him, and for a moment he was silent; a curious feeling came over him; it was as if a sudden light had flashed full and clear upon his eyes, awaking his sight to some sense of transparence, and beauty, and colour, to which he had hitherto been blind.

So might a child's question or answer lift the heart of some wise philosopher to a height far above human reason, by the very simplicity of its beautiful faith.

"And so you will tell them of this—meeting—and they will be angry—and perhaps I may never see you again," he said regretfully. "Doesn't that seem a little hard?"

Her bright face grew grave.

"Do you think it is possible that I—might—see you again?" she asked hesitatingly.

He thought to himself how strangely innocence resembled coquetry, but he only said:

"Very possible—if it depends on me."

"And do you think," she went on anxiously, "that it would be very wrong if I did—not—tell them—I mean if they do not ask?"

"Certainly not wrong, from my point of view," he said energetically. "But of course I do not wish to influence your conscience. As yet, child, you know nothing of a divided duty."

"No," she said simply, "duty always

looks plain enough. I could not say what was not true."

"Let us hope they will not ask," he said gently. "For, indeed, if they are so unreasonable, it seems to me that they don't deserve such a sacrifice of self as your whole life seems. Why, the very birds, and flowers, and insects, have their summer time of freedom and enjoyment. It seems hard that you should be denied it."

"I should like to be free—quite free!" she said, drawing a deep breath, as she threw back her head and looked upwards through the swaying leaves. "But I suppose one never is that."

"Never," said her companion bitterly. "Sometimes our fetters are silver, or iron, or silk, but all the same they are there—and we can't break them if we would. You may be thankful if yours are never heavier than the duty you at present owe. Now I am going to ask a favour of you. Will you," hesitatingly—and looking up with his concealed eyes to where he knew the little girlish figure was standing, "will you shake hands with me before you go? I hear my man coming in the distance, and so we must part."

For a moment she hesitated—then something in the appealing gesture, the helplessness of the strong young form, and of the very hand that was stretched towards her seeking hers, swept doubts and prudery away. She went a few steps nearer. Her little bare hand fluttered like a bird in his strong and eager clasp.

"I am glad to have seen you," she said simply. "And I hope your eyes will soon be quite well. I think," she added, dimpling with sudden laughter at memory of the stolen look, "there is not much doubt about—that."

"If I wished to recover sight before, I wish it a thousandfold more now," he answered with so deep an earnestness that it hushed her laughter into sudden gravity. "And now—no, I won't say good-bye, only, Auf Wiedersehen."

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

FORFAR AND KINCARDINE.

ONCE more we may regret the change in the nomenclature of these Scottish lands. Angus and Mearns, the ancient names of Forfar and Kincardine, are better known and recognised, and have higher historical associations. What a part in the history

of Scotland is played by the Earls of Angus, for instance! and yet, if we refer to a modern map of the country, we shall fail to find any traces of their principality. In popular phraseology, too, Angus bodies have a separate individuality from the men of Mearns, while both are a distinct variety from their neighbours beyond the river Dee, generally known as the canny folk of Aberdeen.

According to received accounts, Angus and Mearns were two sons of Kenneth, King of Scotland, who were made the chiefs of these two divisions of ancient Pictland, once ruled by a shadowy kind of functionary, known as the Maermor. The Earldom of Angus, since the days of The Bruce, was held by the Red Douglasses, of the younger branch of that mighty house. But the hold of the Douglas upon Angus was not so strong as that of the other branch of the family upon its territorial dominions. Several powerful families of Norman origin had settled upon the fertile plain of Strathmore, and allied themselves sometimes with the Douglas and sometimes with the Stuart, as interest or passion at the moment prompted. The eastern side of the county has been appropriately called the land of the Lindsays, from that great family—great originally in wealth and possessions, and great in its fecundity, and the wide-spreading branches that have sprouted forth from the parent stem—a stem whose downfall is recorded in the fact, that, at the present time, the name has disappeared altogether from the roll of the landowners of the county.

The Lindsays claim their descent from a Norman ancestor, and derive their name from an obscure little commune named Limeaex on the chalky table-land of the Pays de Caux; but the first of the name who comes into any prominence in Scotland is William Lindsay, of Crawford, High Justiciar, under William the Lion, whose three sons founded the three principal houses of Lindsay. The chief seat of the family was Finhaven Castle, now a ruin, between Forfar and Brechin; and they had also a fine house in Dundee, a stately mansion with its gates and turrets. And forth from these noble gates rode Sir David the Earl, with his train of thirty knights or men-at-arms, when he embarked from the Rock of Saint Nicholas, just opposite, to sail for London, and meet Lord Welles in mortal combat.

There was no personal quarrel between

the two Knights, only a question as to the respective prowess of their countrymen. The lists were prepared on London Bridge, and Richard the Second, the English King, with Ann of Bohemia, his Queen, watched the combat from a gaily decorated stand, while the houses and gateways on the bridge, the banks of the river, and every point of vantage on either side were crowded with spectators. These last were woefully disappointed when the Soot proved the better man, and held his antagonist at his mercy; but the stranger had fair play, and the King even graciously assured him that, as he had beaten his adversary, he might kill him if he pleased. The Scottish Knight, however, preferred to give away his vanquished foeman to the Queen, who kindly restored him to himself; and so, after much feasting and pomp, Sir David went back to his own country, where everybody felt much encouraged by their champion's prowess.

There is nothing left of the old home of the Lindsays in Dundee; but Finhaven, with its melancholy ruins, is still haunted with the memories, and, as stories go, with the very spectres of the last Lindsays.

Chiefly to be remembered is Alexander, the fourth Earl, whose disposition is shadowed forth in the epithet of the Tiger Earl, while his personal appearance is suggested in his alternative title of Beardie. There is no doubt that he was a terrible ruffian.

It was Beardie who, with the Earl of Ross, formed that celebrated alliance with the Black Douglas, which was only broken by the dagger of the King. And yet the murder of the chief of the conspiracy did not daunt the Tiger Earl. When the Gordons of the North declared for the King and marched into Angus, the Earl came out to meet them, and felt sure to win the day. His own men-at-arms were but little outmatched by the Gordons, and he had a reserve of the best axemen of Angus, under the Laird of Balnamoon. Just before the battle the Laird had occasion to trouble his chief about a little matter of business. There were certain lands convenient to Balnamoon, "the whilk if the Earl might grant to his faithful servant—" The Tiger cut short further speech with a growl. "It was not a time when the spears of the Gordons were glittering in their front to be talking of wadsets and feuferms. To the front and lay on, Balnamoon."

The Earl may be supposed to have fought like the incarnate tiger he was; but in the thick of the fight he looked round for his axemen, and behold they were disappearing over the hills. The Earl had the good sense to know when he was beaten, and presently rode for his life with the rest of his mounted followers.

The chase was sharp over the career and right up to the castle wall of Finhaven, when down went the heavy portcullis behind the last of the Lindsays, and the Gordons hastily dispersed, expecting a flight of arrows from the battlements. So close had been the chase, that one of the youngest and bravest Gordons had ridden into the courtyard with his enemies, and was thus trapped like a rat in a cage. But the youth kept his own counsel; he was battered, and dented, and splashed like the rest; no one noticed him, and he rushed into the hall with all the other warriors, hungry and thirsty from the fray. Then he heard the old Tiger roar, and swear, and rave, invoking all kinds of imprecations upon himself and Balnamoon, as he tossed off cup after cup of blood-red wine from his silver goblet. Then there was an alarm that a band of Gordons was riding that way, and the whole assemblage rose tumultuously, and hastened to mount and ride out to meet them. The young foeman contrived to snatch up Beardie's silver cup in the confusion, and riding out with the rest, took occasion soon to part company, and presently was lucky enough to join his chief with his trophy.

The Tiger Earl, as has been said, knew well enough when he was beaten; and, as matters went badly with the Douglas faction, he tried to make his peace with the King. Now the King was bitterly incensed against the fiery Earl, and had sworn a great oath that he would destroy Finhaven Castle; but the Earl coming before the King barefooted, and trussed like a criminal ready for the scaffold, the Royal pity was aroused for such a proud man thus fallen; and the King forgave him all the more readily that the Douglasses were still strong, and that the Tiger and his men would be a valuable reinforcement for the Royal army. Thus the King rode back with the Earl to Finhaven, where he was feasted right royally.

The tall keep still remains, shaken, riven, but still unsubdued by time, as a testimony to the King's clemency; and, if tradition is to be believed, as a monument

to the cruelty of the Tiger Earl. For high up on the crest of the south-east wall of the castle, are still visible a row of spikes, from which it is said the heads of his victims would be seen, standing in a row, on any fine summer's day; among others, in spite of the prayers of his lady, a poor wandering minstrel with his harp, whose fate is told in the ballad:

The lady craved pity; but nane wad he gie,
The poor aged minstrel must die,
And Crawford's ain hand placed the grey head and
lyre
On the spikes o' the turret so high.

The common place of execution was the wide-spreading chestnut tree by the castle gate. This was a majestic and venerable tree, a Spanish chestnut of a kind then unknown elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Some Roman soldier had dropped a nut upon the spot—centuries before—out of which the tree had sprung, and so went on flourishing from age to age. Beardie himself regarded the tree with a kind of superstitious veneration; and once, when a poor youth lopped a branch from it to make a walking-stick, Beardie pursued the lad with horseman and hound, and overtaking him, brought him back, and hung him to one of the branches of the fatal tree. The vengeance of Heaven, long suspended, for this ruthless deed descended upon the house of Lindsay. The victim never ceased to haunt the place of execution; indeed he haunts it now, and, known as Jack Barefoot, hovers about the place as a reproach to the tortured spirit of the wicked Earl. Body as well as spirit, indeed, for although pedigrees tell us that Earl Beardie died A.D. 1454, it was currently believed that the wicked Earl still survived in some secret chamber of the ruined castle, according to the popular saying:

Earl Beardie ne'er will dee,
Nor pair Jock Barefoot be set free,
As lang's there grows a chestnut tree.

Even had the curse depended upon the existence of that particular chestnut tree, the expiation would have had a long course, for the chestnut still held its ground by the castle wall up to the year 1760.

As in many another family, there was a kind of alternation between good and bad, of gentle and ferocious, with the Lindsays. To a wicked Earl succeeded a good Duke—yes, actually a Duke—with a patent still in existence, about which there has been question of privilege even in the present century. Then the good Duke had two bad sons, the younger of whom killed the

elder, and did not venture to claim his father's dignities. The fratricide made some atonement for his crime by dying gallantly on Flodden Field. A successor, the eighth Earl, David, had a son known as the Wicked Master, whose character was so abominable that, after solemn arraignment at Dundee in 1630, he and his family were blotted out from the succession, and the lordship and estates transferred to the kindred house of Edzell. The Wicked Master, however, had plenty of friends, who fought lustily for his rights, and even besieged and took Finhaven Castle. Eventually the Wicked Master's son succeeded, who was an active partisan of Queen Mary's cause, and his son was the hero of a combat with the rival house of Glamis. Lord Glamis was at that time Chancellor of Scotland, and passing down Stirling High Street with his train, he met the Lindsay, who had also a great following of fighting men. The two Lords passed each other without exchanging any greeting, and some of their men coming into collision, a brawl arose, sword thrusts and pistol shots were exchanged, and the Chancellor fell, with a bullet through his head.

The last of the Earls of this line is known as the Captive Lord, as he had wasted and mismanaged his estate in such fashion that, by sentence of a kind of family council, he was committed to safe custody in Edinburgh Castle. The captive's daughter, Lady Jean, neglected and forlorn, married "a public herald," otherwise a town bellman, and even fell to the grade of a public mendicant, and to begging for crusts and broken victuals, where her forefathers had held almost princely sway. Indeed, the progress of the Lindsays seemed ever from bad to worse, and people long recalled a prophecy, or malediction, of Cardinal Beaton, to the effect that every Lindsay should be poorer than his father.

The new line of Earls Crawford was no more fortunate than the old. The last of them was a spirited soldier, who fought first of all in Spain, and then took a command for King Charles in the Civil Wars; was at Edgehill, and many another fight and skirmish; and, when his master's cause was lost, went back to Spain and there sought military employment.

The Laird of Edzell was now the chief of the line. The ruined towers of Edzell, lying on one of the streams of the North Esk, had been for centuries the hospitable

home of the Laids of that ilk. It was known as the Kitchen of Angus, whose doors were never closed to the poor and needy; but the kindly qualities of the Lindsays only helped to their ruin. The last Laird of Edzell was compelled to sell his estates, which were bought by the more fortunate Maules, Lords Panmure, and, wandering away, he died at last as the hostler of a humble country inn.

Another line of Lindsays has brought down the family honours to the present day; but their history is not connected with Angus, where, as has already been said, the name is no longer to be found in the roll of landowners; but so prolific was the family, and so widely spread are its ramifications, that there are Lindsays all over Scotland who justly regard themselves as scions of this ancient house, the Clan Lindsay of that fine "Lament":

Bright star of the morning that beamed on the brow
Of our chief of ten thousand, oh, where art thou
now?

The sword of our fathers is cumbered with rust.
And the race of Clan Lindsay is bowed to the dust.

The ruin and desolation of Edzell Castle is not due to its present proprietors, for soon after its purchase Lord Panmure joined the rising of 1715, and on its suppression all his lands were forfeited to the Crown. Edzell then fell into the hands of the York Buildings Company. This company, whose name sounds stangely out of tune in such a connection, was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1690 for raising water from the Thames to York Buildings, near the Strand, to supply London in competition with the New River Company. Its objects were extended in 1719, and a further capital of one million two hundred thousand pounds raised to purchase forfeited and other estates and grant annuities and life assurances. The company became insolvent in 1733, and the estates were managed for the benefit of the annuitants and other creditors till 1764, when most of them were sold by public roup in Edinburgh. Many of the lots were purchased by the descendants of their former proprietors, and Edzell came again into possession of the Panmure family. But half a century of neglect and spoliation had reduced the old castle and home of Edzell to a melancholy ruin, only the shell remaining of its ancient walls, and those parts which could not be profitably disposed of.

Another powerful family shared with the Lindsays the territorial influence of the county. The Castle of Glamis, situated in the most fertile and lovely part of the

Howe of Angus, is a noble specimen of the lordly mediæval dwelling, half castle and half palace. With its towers, turrets, extinguisher roofs, and corbie-stepped gables, the aspect of Glamis Castle is at once quaint and imposing. About the old walls cluster memories from the earliest period of Scottish history.

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Tradition tells of a Scottish King murdered within the walls of Glamis, and the history of the Lords of Glamis would supply materials for any number of wild mysterious tales. The founder of the line was Sir John Lyon, called the White Lyon, from his complexion, who married a daughter of King Robert the Second by Elizabeth More. The King gave Glamis, hitherto a Royal seat, to his favoured son-in-law, who was slain by one of the Lindsays in some broil. From that time the line ran on high in Royal favour, and increasing its possessions by advantageous alliances till the death of the sixth Lord Glamis in 1528. The young and beautiful widow of Glamis married Archibald Campbell of Nepneith, and, with her husband, fell under the suspicion of conspiring against James the Fifth. Informers and spies were abundant, who played upon the King's rapacity and fears; and on the evidence of such, Lady Glamis; her husband; her son, Lord Glamis, a mere youth; a kinsman, John Lyon; and an old priest, were arraigned and condemned for high treason, in compassing the death of the King with poison or witchcraft. On the seventeenth of July, 1537, the lovely Lady Glamis was burnt alive on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh amidst universal pity and compassion. Lord Glamis was reserved, with the sentence of death hanging over him till he should come of age; but all the family estates were confiscated, and the King himself took possession of Glamis Castle, and visited the place at times during the short remainder of his life.

With the death of King James all this evil fortune came to an end; the false witness recanted, the young Lord was set free, and Glamis was restored to him.

Except for this interregnum, the fortunes of the family were prosperous enough. There was the Chancellor killed by the Lindsays in Stirling town, and who left a son only two years old to succeed to his honours. Hence the Tutor of Glamis became an important personage, and it was this tutor or guardian who was con-

cerned in that conspiracy known as the Raid of Ruthven. He it was who, when the young King burst into tears on finding himself a captive, sternly told him "that he might greet as he pleased, for it was better that bairns should greet than bearded men." Still the family were devoted to the Stuarts, and especially when they fell into misfortune. The fifth Earl of Strathmore was killed at Sheriffmuir; but his brother, who succeeded him, made his peace with the house of Hanover. Four brothers succeeded each other as Earls of Strathmore, and the family seemed on the verge of extinction. But the youngest of the brothers had a son John, who succeeded to the Earldom and raised the territorial importance of the family to its highest pitch by marrying the great heiress of the period, Mary Eleanor Bowes, of Streatlam and Gibside, in Durham. At the end of nine years' married life the Earl died, and his widow became again the richest match in England, for only a small portion of her vast estates were settled on the title. The mark of adventurers and fortune-hunters, the Countess, who was of a weak and excitable nature, was entrapped into a marriage with one of the most worthless of her admirers. This was Stony Robinson, a man of brutal disposition, who treated the poor Countess with such cruelty that any affection she might have had for him was soon turned to loathing and detestation. The Countess escaped from her husband's control, was captured, tortured, as she affirmed, and escaped again. The relatives of her late husband protected her, and the courts of law were invoked, and Robinson was put to silence. The Countess did not long survive her troubles, and all her estates fell to the house of Strathmore.

From about this period, the last quarter of the eighteenth century, begins what is known as the Mystery of Glamis—the existence, that is, of a secret chamber in Glamis Castle, containing some presence of a weird or horrible character. It is curious to trace the beginning of this story, of which Walter Scott was perhaps the first to publish any notice. The great novelist had himself visited Glamis, and alludes to the secret chamber, but with some reticence, as if not altogether sure of his ground. The next authority is Robert Chambers, who seems to have visited Glamis at some period before 1824, the date of publication of his "Picture of Scotland." Chambers introduces the legend of

Earl Beardie, who never had anything to do with Glamis by the way, who is supposed to sit playing cards in the mysterious room, in fulfilment of some ancient doom, which expires only on the final Judgement Day. And Mr. Warden's account of Glamis, in his "History of Angus," published in 1880, states that "in the intricacies of the Castle it is supposed there is a room which, if discovered, would be found to present a scene far beyond the simple horrors of a haunted chamber." Mrs. Oliphant, too, has written a very thrilling story, published in "Blackwood's Magazine," December, 1876, having the secret chamber and its horrors as a "motif," in which Glamis is transparently alluded to.

Whatever the nature of the mystery, it is understood that it is now fairly dead and buried. The cupboard may be there, but the skeleton is gone; the ghost has been laid with bell, book, and candle, and is no longer a terror in the secret watches of the night.

Had the Lords of Glamis been in fact as well as in title also, the Lords of Strathmore, they would have possessed, perhaps, the richest Earldom in the kingdom. For Strathmore, or the Great Valley, embraces not only the fertile Howes of Angus and of Mearns, but stretches from the coast by Stonehaven to Cowal in Argyle, spacious, fertile, and luxuriant. It is a valley in the strict sense of the word, for it is not connected with any existing river system; it is rather a wide depression enclosed by independent chains of hills, and watered by innumerable streams that flow across it to the coast or to the great estuaries of the Tay and Forth. Thus Angus, while it has its share of the Strath, has also three other districts that deserve some attention—the Shore, the Sidlaws, and the Braes o' Angus, these last being the hills and passes that rise gradually to the Highlands.

The Sidlaws, indeed, lying just to the southward of Glamis, occupy but an insignificant space in the county; but one of their nearest summits is occupied by the Castle of Denoon, an early earthwork with an enormous vallum twenty-seven feet high and thirty feet thick.

Immediately to the south lies Dundee, one of the most thriving towns in Scotland. It is Bonnie Dundee, bright, stirring, and pleasant, with a fine flavour of tarred ropes and tanned nets, of sail-cloth and ships, apparel and tackling, of linen and jute, with the less savoury, and yet most welcome odour of whale and seal

oil, when the ships come home from their voyages to the frozen North.

Little is left of the old towers, walls, and mansions of Dundee, but the Cowgate Port has been spared, more as a religious than a civic memorial; for from the battlements of the gate in 1544, preached the famous George Wishart to the plague-stricken who were camped outside the wall on one side, and on the other to those worthy burghers who had escaped the pest, and who stood reverently in the street to listen.

A quaint old story, too, is to be found in the Chronicles, of how Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, brother of King William the Lion, being abroad on the sea returning from the Crusades, his brother the King, in joy at his approach, vowed that he would give him the ground on which he should land. The Earl landed at Dundee, and ex voto, a grand church was built, whose noble tower still remains to give dignity to the aspect of the busy town.

Then there was a terrible storm and sack of Dundee in the civil wars by the soldiers of General Monk, with much plundering of harmless citizens irrespective of their politics or religious opinions; while the governor's head was struck off as a warning to any disposed to over-obstinate resistance to the established Government.

A story of somewhat later date is the burning of Grizel Jeffrey for witchcraft, an occasion for a general holiday. A ship-master coming into port after many years' foreign trading, noticed the holiday aspect of the town, and enquired the cause. This was his native town, he said, and he had come home after long years to see his old mother, and make merry with his friends, and he would be delighted to share their holiday sports. Then the men of the port pointed out to him the blue cloud of smoke that was rising over the house-tops, and told him they were burning Grizel Jeffrey, that notorious old witch. At that the shipman turned pale, and fell against the rigging, when, as soon as he could speak, he bade his men cast off the moorings, and so he set sail. And then people remembered that Goody Jeffrey had a son who was a seaman, and they guessed that this must be he who had sailed into the port, and thus he had been welcomed home.

But the saddest story of all, perhaps, is of that Sunday just after Christmas, 1879, when in the mist, and rain, and storm, and the darkness of a winter's night, a train, containing nearly ninety persons, started

from the south side of the Tay bridge. This was the largest bridge in the world, perhaps—ten thousand six hundred and twelve feet in length, divided into eighty-five spans, of which the widest stretched across two hundred and forty-five feet. The rail platform was only fifteen feet wide, and adapted for a single line, and was eighty-eight feet above high-water mark.

In the mist and rain the train departed, but it never reached the further side. There was a desperate leap of all that mass of wood and iron and palpitating human forms, as, with falling girders and broken columns the whole plunged headlong into the roaring tide—an awful second of the agony of death for all those living creatures, and then swift doom. Few fragments of the train and few human bodies were recovered; but some months afterwards the wreck of one of the railway carriages was found on the opposite coast of Norway.

The set of tides and currents from the Tay to the opposite coast of Norway is also illustrated by the story of the fisherman's stick or nobby, used in the salmon fishing, which was dropped into the river, and found by someone on the Norwegian coast. The nobby was branded with the name of its port of origin, and was returned to its owners, who gave the name of Norway to their fishing station in commemoration of the incident.

Right in the track of vessels making for the Tay, is the once dangerous Inchcape Rock, now crowned by the Bell Rock lighthouse.

The worthy abbot of Aberbrothock Had floated that bell on the Inchcape Rock; and the ruins of the Abbey, built of the red sandstone of the district, still crown the little town of Arbroath. Here everything is red—houses, buildings, and the rocky coast-line. Numerous caves have been hollowed by the restless sea in the soft sandstone; caves that, according to tradition, were once inhabited by a wild, half-savage race but little akin to the Angus bodies in general.

Pitscottie tells the story of a family of cannibals, living in one of these caves, who were hunted down and destroyed by the neighbouring inhabitants. All were consumed by fire except one yearling female child, who, although brought up on ban-nocks and brose, eventually took to the ghoulish habit, and was also burnt as a public example.

The red sandstone rock continues along the coast-line till it culminates in the pre-

monitory of Red Head. Beyond lies Montrose, a pleasant and even charming town, from whose port the Chevalier sailed, in 1716, on the failure of the Jacobite rising. A little inland is Brechin, with its cathedral tower and a round tower of the Irish pattern; and here also is Brechin Castle, the ancient seat of the Manles, now represented by the Ramsays, Earls of Dalhousie.

Beyond, along the shore of Kincardine, or Mearns, the shore stretches along, desolate and almost uninhabited, save for some fishing villages, such as John's Haven and Bervie. But Stomhaven has prospered of late as a watering place, and the ruins of Dunottar Castle, close by, are extensive and imposing. At Dunottar the regalia of Scotland—its Honours, as the people named the symbols of Royalty—were deposited in the Civil Wars. The Castle held out for the King, and the regalia were cleverly removed before its surrender and hidden by a neighbouring minister.

As for Kincardine burgh—if burgh it ever were—it has almost reached the vanishing point, in the form of a hamlet; but all about are traces of primeval defences, with the foundations of a vast fortress, or city of refuge, which may have played its part in unknown wars. Here, too, linger the traces of legend and romance connected with the story of Kenneth the Third and the vengeance of Fenella; with the statue of brass and the brazen apple; or with other pleasant devices of the mediæval and mystic fashion.

"ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS."

IN many weekly newspapers and magazines "Answers to Correspondents" form a prominent feature; and those which are classed under the general heading—where any classification is made—are usually as interesting as they are diversified. The practice of writing to editors of newspapers for information is older than most people imagine. In the closing years of the seventeenth century were published the first germs of our invaluable friend, "Notes and Queries." One of the most noticeable of the publications devoted wholly to "Answers to Correspondents," however, was the "British Apollo," which, first issued in the days of "Good Queen Anne," reached its fourth edition in 1740. It professed to give "ten thousand answers to curious questions in most arts and sciences, serious, comical, and humorous. Approved of by

many of the most learned and ingenious of both Universities, and of the Royal Society," and to be "performed by a Society of Gentlemen." Many of the answers given in this volume would be laughed at nowadays by a lad of far less intelligence than Macaulay's schoolboy. How far we have (thanks, principally, to zoological gardens and the like) advanced in our knowledge of natural history may be judged from the fact that the following question is put to the "Gentlemen":

"Pray, what is a rhinoceros?"

This is the answer given:

"A sort of creature strangely different from every other, having one horn, and shaped not unlike an elephant."

After other particulars the "Gentlemen" conclude:

"'Tis needless to enlarge upon this subject, since all persons may at present see in town the skeleton and hide of one of the finest, and the only female ever known—a sight that's truly worth the observation of a man of knowledge in the works of Nature."

How editors of newspapers came to be regarded as the confidants and confessors of persons in every station of life is more than we can explain. Yet editors of journals devoted to the interests of young ladies are, if we may judge by the "Answers to Correspondents" which they contain, looked upon as infallible, and consulted with the same freedom as if editors were pledged to secrecy. They are called upon to arbitrate in love quarrels; to settle all knotty points in connection with the acceptance and wearing of engagement rings; to decide the shades of almost innumerable samples of hair; to say how long courtships should last;—in short, to act as guides, philosophers, and friends. Many people suppose that all, or nearly all, of these answers are fictitious; but this is a mistake. A prolific novelist could not invent a page of such answers weekly. As the "Saturday Review" once said in reference to the "Answers to Correspondents" in one of the young ladies' journals, they "cannot be fictitious, a romance and a life history being embodied in almost each of them."

In the boys' journals the "Answers to Correspondents" are of a very different stamp. The editors seem to be hardly ever troubled with any very difficult or painful subjects, most of the answers being about out-door pastimes, pet animals, the Army and the Navy, handwriting, formulas for producing

oustaches, and the like. One peculiarity struck us, in looking over a number of boys' journals, and that is, that those who require information about the Army and the Navy, almost invariably adopt the pseudonym of "Constant Reader." The obvious inference is, that if they were constant readers, they must have seen the information for which they asked at least once a fortnight. That all of these answers are genuine is, however, more than we should care to say.

Many of the largely-circulated weekly newspapers devote considerable space to answers on legal and medical topics. But there is a certain amount of risk in following some of the answers given. For instance, often in seeking legal advice by letter, some important facts or dates are not mentioned, and, therefore, the lawyer who answers the question may (quite unwittingly, of course) advise wrongly. With regard to medical questions, most doctors are of opinion that the practice of writing for medical advice is to be condemned, for the reason that it is impossible for any physician, however clever he may be, to accurately determine a disease from a few lines of writing from the person affected. A common and simple complaint such as this is, of course, quite possible; but, then, the information required could easily be found in any cheap medical work, of which there are many published.

Looking through a number of "general" "Answers to Correspondents," one cannot help being struck with the fact that certain questions are asked very often. Is marriage with a deceased wife's sister legal? Is Liverpool a sea-port town? What is the population of London? Are rabbits game? Which is the longest tunnel in England? How many acres are there in Yorkshire? How many letters are there in the Bible? Answers to these and similar questions; prescriptions for the cure of dyspepsia; instructions as to the renting of houses; replies to queries on rules of etiquette; occupy many columns weekly. The number of letters in the Bible and the number of acres in Yorkshire seem peculiarly fascinating subjects; indeed, a weekly newspaper declared a short time ago that, in one week, no fewer than sixteen ladies and gentlemen had addressed it on these questions.

We have already said that the genuineness of certain answers to correspondents is more than we should like to vouch for; indeed, as a matter of fact, some of them are transparently fictitious. Most of us remember that, when Nicholas Nickleby

was waiting for Miss Snevellicci, in that lady's apartments, he saw on the table an open scrap-book, containing a number of newspaper cuttings, amongst which was the following "answer" to a "correspondent": "J. S. is misinformed when he supposes that the highly-gifted and beautiful Miss Snevellicci, nightly captivating all hearers at our pretty and commodious little theatre, is not the same lady to whom the young gentleman of immense fortune, residing within a hundred miles of the good city of York, lately made honourable proposals. We have reason to know that Miss Snevellicci is the lady who was implicated in that mysterious and romantic affair, and whose conduct on that occasion did no less honour to her head and heart than do her histrionic triumphs to her brilliant genius."

Mr. Crummles is another case in point. The author of "Nicholas Nickleby" probably knew as much about the interior working of a newspaper office as a good many men, and no doubt he thus intended to satirise the fictitious "Answers to Correspondents" which are published with the object of puffery. In some obscure papers the "puff direct" is used, and in these prints an advertisement of the article or firm "puffed" will generally be found in another column. In connection with the answers to medical questions glaring puffs can be seen in some papers by those who can "read between the lines." Recently, one of the cheap medical journals accused one of its rivals of prescribing a nostrum for the cure of diseases for which it was absolutely worthless. Whether there were any grounds for the charge, we cannot say. In some papers many "Answers to Correspondents" are obviously written to fill up a certain amount of space.

In cases of this sort, however, not much harm is done to anyone. It is when various forms of the puff are used that readers are imposed upon; but it is pleasing to know that correspondents' questions are, as a rule, answered accurately and fairly, and that very often much good advice is given to those in need of it.

MY POOR LITTLE STORY.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

MOTHER says appearance is of no consequence—ultimately. I wonder what she means by ultimately? I think she must

mean after death, for I am sure being pretty matters to a woman as long as she lives.

Father judges the matter differently, and much more correctly, I think. He says beauty is like a letter of introduction; as long as they who bear it don't themselves discredit it, it opens all portals to them.

To be the one plain member of a singularly handsome family, to love beauty and to lack it, is a hard enough lot when one is young and keen of feeling; but, no doubt, I shall come not to mind ultimately—which means when I am dead.

Now, there was Marion, my sister! I wonder how many people have ever seen a woman as beautiful as Marion! Her life and mine lie far apart now, and I do not know that either of us desires that fact altered; but, for all that, I never think of her, as I saw her a hundred times, without a little thrill of rapture.

She was neither fair nor dark, but what the French call *châtain*, her eyes were blue as sapphires, and soft and serene as a summer sky, and her hair was auburn, that is, golden in the sunshine and bronze in the shade. She was tall and slim, but straight as a pine, and she carried herself in a Royal way, like a Queen among courtiers who loved her. Oh, I do full justice to her beauty, and to everything else that was winsome about her!

Mother had made a love-match; had married father in spite of all her family; and, naturally enough, her family ignored her after that. Father was only a curate, and of no particular antecedents; and her father was Lord Hurst, of Stonehurst, fourth Baron of that name, and she might have called herself the Honourable Mrs. Errol, had she chosen. But she never did choose; she was satisfied to be a poor man's wife, she said; and she adapted herself to the circumstances attendant on her altered fortunes in a way that I knew to be heroic, when I understood.

She never talked of her family, and we children had no personal knowledge of anything better than the shabby house we lived in, the poor food we consumed, and the poor clothing we wore; and yet, in some inexplicable way, we knew that our grandfather was a peer, and regarded ourselves as very much better than our neighbours, in consequence. I have no doubt, now, that our little airs of self-importance often rendered us pitifully ridiculous; but, at any rate, they made

us fearless of everyone, and lent us a bearing that, perhaps, was preferable to rustic shyness.

I must have been between seven and eight years old when Lord Hurst died, without even seeing mother or sending her a message; and I remember yet the misery she suffered in consequence.

I suppose when people are dead we begin to tell ourselves—untruthfully enough, I am sure—that they were always right, and then we break our hearts because we grieved them.

From all I ever heard of Lord Hurst I do not think there was any room for doubt that the deceased Baron was a cold, obstinate, old curmudgeon; but if he had embodied all the virtues in the calendar, mother could not have idealised or lamented him more.

"To think that he died and never forgave me!" she used to say to father, and what could father answer? And her family continued the feud after Lord Hurst's death, and no one held out the olive branch to mother. But she never blamed them. Some of them were younger than she, and she only said: "After so many years they could not possibly care."

It was quite three years after Lord Hurst's death, and when no one was thinking of anything of the kind, that Aunt Hilda came to look us up and to make friends. She had spent about fifteen years pondering over mother's misdoings, and I certainly think she might have forgiven her a little sooner; but that never seemed to occur to mother, who wept on her sister's neck as if she had been an angel of mercy.

Aunt Hilda was no longer a young woman, and I think she can never have been a pretty one, for her face was thin, her nose beaky, and her complexion chill and pale, but she was impressive-looking, for all that.

When mother and she had poured out their hearts to each other, we were all brought in to make her acquaintance, and to me, at any rate, the ordeal was very trying. She did not kiss us, or even shake hands with us, she just scrutinised us the one after the other, her curiosity visibly tinged with aversion.

"A goodly quiverful, Millie," she said, with a faint, slow smile; but when Marion appeared, bringing up the rear, her whole face softened.

"A Hurst," she said, and offered her cheek for Marion to kiss.

Aunt Hilda stopped at the hotel in the village that night; and next day we learned that she was going to take Marion to live with her.

We were all much awed by the tidings, and Marion herself was half dismayed and half delighted.

"It is a splendid opportunity for her," mother said with tears in her soft eyes; "and, beautiful as she is, her destiny may be a grand one."

So that was the first thing Marion's face brought her—Aunt Hilda's favour, and the chance of a grand destiny.

For five years after she left us we never saw Marion, though we heard from her regularly.

With us life went on quietly, but less sadly than more prosperous people would suppose. The boys, who came next to me, were growing up and promising well, and the younger girls were learning to be helpful. Then a new Rector had come in place of the old one, and he was kind to father and friendly with the whole of us. He was a youngish man, and a bachelor; pleasant to look at, and pleasanter still to talk to; and, though our parlour was a sadly shabby apartment, I liked it on winter evenings when the lamp was lighted and the curtains drawn, and when Mr. Drew sat beside the hearth discoursing with father.

I am sure father and mother had missed Marion much at first; but, as time passed, they learned gradually to do without her. But when Aunt Hilda wrote that she was going to be married—to make a very satisfactory marriage, Aunt Hilda said—they looked at each other with a sudden sense of approaching loss. She was their own beautiful daughter, but a woman now, and quite done with them and their narrow, common-place life.

Of course, in my eyes, Marion's future wore an entirely different aspect. To belong to the great world that I had heard of vaguely, to be a fashionable woman, rich and perhaps titled, what could be more glorious? Fate certainly had been kind to Marion in that she had attained to all that life could offer, so young.

I was thinking this as we sat all together one evening in the winter time. It was a Saturday, a day on which Mr. Drew never visited us, and the day therefore that we reserved for all our homeliest duties.

Tea was over, and the youngest children had gone to bed, and father was sitting in

the tired attitude habitual with him on Saturday evenings; and George and Christie were disputing in a low voice so as not to disturb him; and mother and I had the big stacking-basket between us; and the room was quiet with the repressed quietness peculiar to full houses; when suddenly we heard a vehicle crunch over the gravel—drive up to the door, and a firm hand sound a vigorous rat-tat-tat with the thin knocker.

"Dear me!" father said, sitting erect and rubbing his eyes, "who can that be?"

"You had better open the door, Lucy," mother said, bundling the unfinished stockings together, and popping the basket under the table.

I smoothed the bits of wool off my apron, turned the lamp higher in our shabby old hall, and opened the door, and there, under the falling snow, was my beautiful sister.

As she came into our shabby parlour and stood among us, she looked like a great figure that a master hand had painted into a poor picture.

"You have come to pay us a long visit, I hope," father said, looking at her with such fond, proud eyes.

"Yes, dearest, a long, long visit." She put out her hand to him in a petting, protective way, that was charming from her, that would have been ridiculous from me, though I might have meant it just as tenderly. "Indeed, I am not sure that I have not come home for good."

"For good?" father and mother echoed rather blankly.

"Yes; now don't say you are sorry," bending over mother, and kissing her as she spoke. "Aunt Hilda and I have quarrelled. You remember she said I was a real Hurst, so I suppose I have the Hurst bad temper and obstinacy, and she did not like that so well."

"And we had thought you were so happy."

"Oh, so I was! Aunt Hilda was kind in many ways; but it is impossible not to quarrel with her sometimes."

"And the man you are to marry—will he not mind?"

"Well, as he is the man I am not to marry it is not of any consequence, whether he does or not."

"But your aunt wrote as if everything were settled."

"Yes, that is Aunt Hilda's way. She wished it, and of course it never occurred to her that my inclination might be an

obstacle. For my part I never thought of the man, being proud of the right I have inherited from my mother to please myself."

"That is every woman's right," mother said, drawing herself up a little, "and we are thankful you have been true to yourself."

That was all that was said on the subject then; if Marion told the details of her parting from Aunt Hilda later, I did not hear them.

When a girl like Marion comes back, after years of absence, to a home like ours, she is certain to make a material difference to everyone in it one way or another.

At first we were all afraid of her, and ashamed of our poverty before her just as if she had been a stranger. But that wore off by degrees, as, in a number of indescribable ways, she made life better for the whole of us. For one thing it was a joy to look at her; to hear her voice; to see her smile. And then, she was always so bright, so helpful, so independent. If she regretted the fleshpots of Egypt, as represented by Aunt Hilda, she never said so; and where I should have sat down sometimes to grumble, she bent her mind to see if the cause for grumbling might not be lessened.

Mother pitied Marion for a time, because of what she had voluntarily abandoned, as she had never pitied herself; but by degrees that feeling gave way to contentment in her presence.

Of course, people cannot become cheerful to order; but if they could, what a blessing it would prove to those who live with them! I don't think any of us ever realised that we had much to be thankful for till Marion was back with us.

But it was easy for Marion to see the bright side of life, with a face that was a passport to all hearts. "Who would not be good that was so lovely?" I said to mother one day; and she answered that Marion's soul showed itself on her face.

To think people good because they are beautiful is an old, old delusion; not that I mean that in any mean or censorious way, for Marion was good also; I only mean that it was easier to detect the good in her because she was so beautiful.

At first she had been rather in the habit of making fun of Mr. Drew, calling him the rosy Rector behind his back, and feigning huge interest in all his hobbies when he was present; but after she had heard of the many instances in which he

had been kind to father her demeanour altered; she always spoke of him gratefully, and listened to his opinions with less assumption of deference, but with more genuine interest. Of course, she did not mean anything but to be kind, because she thought him kind; and she was hardly to blame that he mistook her meaning and learned to love her.

I saw how things were going well enough, but breaking my heart over it secretly did not mend matters. It was all quite natural and reasonable. How could any one think of me when Marion was by? And yet I don't think I made the fact any more palatable by asking myself that question.

When mother was told that Marion had refused Mr. Drew, she was very sorry. "If it had only been Lucy," she said, "I think he would have made Lucy happy;" but being sorry did not affect the circumstances.

To Marion I am sure it seemed pitiful that she should come in the panoply of her triumphant beauty to wage such unequal war with her poor little rustic sister, and rob her of her solitary admirer. I know she was as deeply penitent for what had occurred as though her misdoing had been intentional, and her resolve to make amends to me in some vague way, for an unconscious wrong, dated from the hour when she knew that Mr. Drew had been interested in me before she came.

She had been six months at Mudford, and still Aunt Hilda made no sign, entrenching herself behind the Hurst pride and obstinacy, and waiting for the other side to capitulate.

But Marion was a Hurst, too; and, when Aunt Hilda had waited till she was weary, she remembered that and yielded. Just as she had done on the occasion of her first visit, she pounced down upon us unexpectedly, and asked Marion to forgive and forget.

Marion was touched at sight of her, touched most of all by the fact that it was Aunt Hilda who sought her pardon; and she fell on her neck, and wept over her, and said she also was to blame.

Things brightened up after that, and the two jested over their quarrel and made light of it; and then Aunt Hilda asked how soon Marion would be ready to go back with her.

"I cannot go back, dear Aunt Hilda," Marion answered gently.

"And why not, pray?"

"Because this is my home."

"Fiddlesticks," Aunt Hilda said; though

I am sure no one could have expected such an expression from her. "What opportunities have you here?"

"There are other things to think of besides opportunities."

"Your father and mother are not selfish enough to wish to keep you hidden in a hole like this."

"But I hope I am not selfish enough to leave them. Ask them if they are not happier for having me at home."

"Don't be ridiculous. Parents must consider their children's welfare."

"And children, when they have arrived at years of discretion, are bound to consider their parents' advantage."

"Then you will leave me alone, me who have no one."

"I am not your only niece; there is Lucy. To take her with you would be kind, and she is very amiable."

"That little dowdy!"

"Lucy is a very sweet girl, Aunt Hilda; you would find her much more tractable than you ever found me."

"That may be, but I shall not try the experiment. If you do not choose to come back with me I can live alone, as I did before."

"I cannot go back, Aunt Hilda."

"I suppose it is all on account of that fellow——"

"There are some things even you must not speak of," Marion said, the proud Hurst blood flaming in her cheeks, and for the moment Aunt Hilda was silenced.

But she remained for lunch, and at lunch she surveyed me critically, condescendingly admitted that I had improved; and before she left offered me a chill invitation to pay her a visit.

Mother was very pleased. I think adversity had weakened her character, she seemed so terribly anxious to keep in with the only one of her relatives who had manifested friendliness towards her. To everything Aunt Hilda did she imputed the noblest motives; while it must be candidly admitted that sometimes it needed a good deal of imagination to detect the nobility. For instance, she must have known how much a trifling present would have simplified the efforts attendant on my going to visit her; but she never volunteered it, or made any reference thereto, except in saying coldly to Marion, "You know what dresses she will require."

"Never mind," Marion said to me when we were alone, "we shall manage without her money."

I hated to take Marion's things from her, for they were all so beautiful, and suited her so well, and I think she had a certain womanly pleasure in being always well dressed; but what could I do? Aunt Hilda had invited me, and everyone said I must go to her, and there was no other way of giving me an outfit. Of course, I protested continually, but Marion was firmly insistent.

"I do not need dinner dresses and tea gowns at Mudford," she said; "besides, Aunt Hilda will like you better for being presentable."

"I don't think I shall go to Aunt Hilda," I said several times. "What is the good of going? She will make me uncomfortable, and she will never like me, because I am not a Hurst."

"When things are good for us we must swallow them, no matter how they are flavoured; and it is good for you to go to Aunt Hilda, and be introduced to society, and see what ladies and gentlemen are like," Marion said, smiling.

"I think there are very good ladies and gentlemen at Mudford," I answered jealously.

"Of course there are; but there are more in London," Marion said demurely, as she went on trimming my hat.

I looked very well when I was finally prepared for my journey—very well for me, I mean—and Aunt Hilda unbent a little when she saw me, and told me again that I had improved.

Aunt Hilda's house was not at all what I had expected. It was small and gloomy, and many things in it were worn and shabby; but it must have been the right style of house, or Aunt Hilda would not have had it; and knowing that, I kept my observations to myself, and enjoyed what was nice with all my heart.

The servants were quite a revelation to me, with their silent, respectful ways, and their trim and spotless clothing; and to have my hair dressed by Aunt Hilda's maid, and to be taken to the theatre in Aunt Hilda's neat little brougham, filled me with ecstacy. No doubt there was a good deal of snobbishness in my satisfaction because I dined at eight o'clock, and had a man-servant to hand me things; but we cannot help being as Nature has moulded us, and it was not my fault that Nature, which had made Marion a Hurst, had made me only a snob.

Of course life with Aunt Hilda was not one of unalloyed joy at the first. Often and

often I was homesick, and longed from the depths of my heart for the crowded house and the noisy demonstrative love of the young ones at home. But after a time I outgrew that, and when my pleasures and the occupations provided for me had begun to absorb me, I grew to shudder a little at the recollection of the life I had left behind.

"How could Marion go back to it?" I asked myself a hundred times, and the question always remained unanswered. To have been offered life with Aunt Hilda, and to have voluntarily and cheerfully chosen the other, was incomprehensible to me.

A BELGIAN CHRISTMAS EVE.

"TEN minutes too late, Monsieur!" said the porter, with a shrug and a smile that was meant to be consolatory, as I alighted in front of the great railway station, merely to hear that the train which should have wafted me seawards and Londonwards had started without me. It was vexatious; but there was no help for it. There was an evening train by which I could travel, and so, leaving my luggage in the cloak-room at the station, I drove back to my former comfortable quarters in the hotel which I had lately left. It was pleasantly situated, that hotel, overlooking one of those broad boulevards that are the pride of that old Belgian city—a city of gardens, and parks, and open spaces that keep it bright and healthy, if less quaintly picturesque than some others of the great towns of the Low Countries.

The day was fine, clear, and frosty, but the winter sun shone cheerily on the tall elms, leafless now, of the boulevard upon which I gazed, musing over recollections of former Christmas Eves, such as this was, very variously spent in different quarters of the world. Presently my practised ear caught the approaching sound of military music, slowly played, and next the unmistakeable roll of muffled drums, the heavy tread of marching feet, and the clank of accoutrements.

"An officer's funeral!" I thought, and the conjecture was confirmed as an advanced guard, with reversed arms, came in sight, and halted in front of a large white house, next door to the hotel. I now observed, for the first time, that the wide portecochère of this mansion was open and the door-posts and lintel draped with hangings of black edged with silver, while in front

of the entrance stood a hearse, drawn by four sleek, black horses, whose trappings of black velvet were trimmed with silver, too. Of silver also were the four huge lamps, lighted now, and blinking, like yellow eyes, at the pale sunshine of the short winter's day, which decked the angles of the roof, while in front towered a tall silver cross. The great Flanders horses, as if proud of their caparisons, pawed the pavement impatiently, bringing a shower of sparks at every hoof-stroke, and seemed eager for the start.

"The millinery and upholstery of mourning ceremonial," said I to myself, "are much the same all the world over. Your undertaker has a gainful trade, no doubt. But what have we here?"—as a slender young fellow, in a court suit splendid with embroidery, wearing a sword and carrying a cocked hat under his arm, tripped out of the house and gave orders to the black-coated satellites who stood beside the equipage, with the tone and manner of one accustomed to be obeyed. And then I remembered that foreign funerals of the more expensive sort require, by tradition, the presence of some such functionary, who directs the proceedings, and who is styled an usher. The make-up, in a theatrical sense, of this individual usher was faultless, and he was evidently impressed, himself, by a sense of the weight and dignity of the part which he had to play, as Deputy Grand Marshal of the Palace at the Court of King Death. He wore his gold-hilted sword as gracefully as if a rapier had dangled gaily at his side since his boyhood; his costume was perfect, from the lace ruffles that almost hid his small hands to the buckled shoes whose varnished leather encased his dapper feet; and the pearly whiteness of his silk stockings was unmarred by speck or crease, as he moved to and fro, gesticulating, finding fault, waving his wand of ebony as if it had been the bâton of the leader of an orchestra.

Never was there a critic so hard to satisfy as this active young master of the ceremonies. Again and again he skipped out into the roadway, at imminent risk of being crushed by some jolting drag or fast-trotting tandem returning from the afternoon promenade in the Bois, to take an artistic survey of the hearse and its decorations; and each time he insisted on some change in the position of the costly frippery that bedecked it. Presently there were carried forth several gigantic wreaths of those Parma violets, of which Nice sends so

many cargoes from her sun-kissed gardens to the bleaker North, and then the usher became almost frantic with excitement. He would confide the arrangement of these monstrous garlands to no meaner hands than his; nor was he easy to please, even with his own skill, in massing the rich luxuriance of the flowers.

Around each of the big silver lamps, blazing as in defiance of the daylight, a wreath was hung; three more were on the roof; three within the hearse, where the vacant space seemed to await the coffin. I say "seemed" advisedly, for, if ever there was a four-wheeled impostor, brought out from its dismal coach-house for ostentation alone, it was that same hearse. But the usher was in his glory, now by the aid of a step-ladder scaling the roof to shift the places of the wreaths; now diving in between the heavy curtains of the mortuary car, like a showman anxious to get his puppets ready for the coming show; hurrying in tip-toe haste; capering; scolding; but always with a face the intense seriousness of which was clearly single-minded and earnest. Then came a pause, and then the heavy tread of men trained to keep step, but walking now with somewhat of a shuffling gait, by reason of the burden they had to bear. That burden was the coffin, covered with a rich pall, worked in gold, with coronets and heraldic bearings, and carried by soldiers.

Solemnly the usher skipped forward, almost staggering under the weight of three colossal violet wreaths, and these he proceeded to place upon the coffin, so that one floral crown should overlap another; and, being at last satisfied with the display, he waved his hand aloft, and immediately the music struck up, and the procession began to move. It had to pass in front of the hotel, so that all the actors and accessories of the dismal show glided, with slow steps and frequent halts, past my window. First went the escort; then the band; and next the coffin with its martial bearers, while beside it was led the charger, covered with a huge veil of crape, through which could be seen the holsters and the sword dangling at the saddle-bow, which its dead master would never mount again. Two and two, and bareheaded, came the mourners, on foot, and apparently indifferent to the chill of the frosty air; men of wealth and station, as I guessed, and with whom were mingled a number of officers of the garrison in varied uniforms. Far and wide rang out the dirge of the

music; the empty hearse, with its nodding cross and blazing lamps, was followed by a long line of coronetted carriages, the owners of which, doubtless, walked in front, and which were tenantless too; and then came on the rearguard with reversed arms, slowly marching on their way to the taper-lighted church and the distant cemetery.

The funeral had not long gone by, before I became conscious of a certain stir and bustle in the street below, which evidently portended some important event. Spectators, market women, workmen, and bloused peasants, homeward-bound with baskets emptied of the eggs, and chickens, and shapeless lumps of yellow butter, began to congregate, mingling with some score or so of that minor bourgeoisie that lives frugally on its modest income, and, having overmuch leisure, is greedy for a sight of any street spectacle. There were idle troopers, too, belonging to the cavalry, whose trumpets rang out shrilly, ever and anon, from the barracks hard by; while a milk-woman on her rounds, with glistening brass cans in the little green cart that her sturdy mastiff, with his brass-studded harness and red worsted tassels, drew so easily, forgot her customers as she secured for herself a place in the foremost rank. Then children suddenly appeared, basket-laden, strewing the street with flowers and cut fragments of coloured paper, until the rough paving-stones all but disappeared beneath an irregular mosaic of red and white, green and blue. The bells of neighbouring churches sent forth, with common accord, a joyous peal, which was echoed by those of a monastery on the farther side of my hotel, and through the gate of which I had often seen the poor—such beggars as Sterne depicted—going in for their daily dole of bread and soup. From afar came the boom and clang of music, blended with the deep, rich notes of the chanting, as the head of the procession came in sight.

It was difficult to believe that the town could have contained so many girls— young, well dressed, and pretty—as had been by ecclesiastical influence or by social considerations, induced to walk in that procession. They were of all ages, from the lisping child ill at ease in her stiffly-starched frock and white shoes, to the tall maiden, carrying a heavy flag with the air of a Joan of Arc; but there they were, squadrons of girls in white; beves of girls in blue; companies of girls in pink, or lilac, or maize colour; but all either actually bearing some

emblem or badge, or feigning to assist the progress of some shrine, or reliquary, or colossal crucifix, or group of images, by grasping the end of one of the hundreds of bright ribbons that were attached to these, the central features and rallying points of the show. On, on they streamed, walking demurely to the music of bassoon and serpent, cornet and drum, of clashing cymbal and piping clarionet, while the musicians, collected from many a parish of the city and suburbs, beat and blew their best. Amen the music was hushed, and nothing broke the silence, save the deep voices of the chanting priests, and then arose the shrill singing of many children, as school after school, well drilled, and officered by nuns or friars, as the case might be, marched on to swell the apparently interminable array.

A marvellous effect was there of colour and grouping artistically arranged, and a rare display too, of treasures ecclesiastic that seldom see the light of day. There is nothing now in the market, were an Empress the bidder, to equal that old point-lace just drawn forth from the oaken chest in which it usually reposes, and which was the pious work of supple fingers that have crumbled to dust two centuries ago. Where can you find such goldsmith's work as yonder casket, that in bygone ages was consecrated as the receptacle of some wonder-working relic; or see such a triumph of art as that jewelled chalice, the *répoussé* work of which was surely wrought by fairy hammers, so light and delicate is the tracery?

Those who take a share in the procession seem to have an all-engrossing interest in their task, which makes them for the moment deaf and blind to all that has not reference to the business of the hour. The youngest prattler who has been entrusted with a miniature silken pennon, whereon some sacred motto has been worked in gold or silver, is as earnestly devoted to the duty as are those two stalwart men, who have quite enough to do as they support, by its double poles, a heavy parochial banner of purple velvet and gleaming bellion, or yonder band of damsels in white, with flowing veils, tall and fair as so many lilies, who cluster round the gilded shrine, within which glimpses can be caught of the gorgeously-attired images within.

On, and still onwards, like a shining river bathed in multi-coloured light, flows the apparently endless stream of the great

procession, pausing, sometimes, when the sound of chanting voices is alone heard; and soon, at the tinkling signal of a silver bell, resuming its slow-stateness of march. The route already traversed must have been long; the keen air, as the day begins to *dé*, grows sharper still; but no one of the many actors, old or young, in this outdoor panorama, appears to suffer from fatigue or cold: the whole pageant passes on with the steady regularity of a machine. As a pictorial effect the thing was admirable. The eye became, as it were, surfeited with rich hues, with azure and carnation, and purple and green; it was relieved by pure white, set off by the glitter of gold and gems. No such success could have been achieved save by traditional skill, passed on from age to age, and linking this nineteenth century of ours to a very remote past indeed, when this very pageantry belonged to a faith long since dead; and it was in praise of the divinities of half-forgotten Olympus, that hymns were sung, and flowers twined, and cars adorned with gold leaf and plumes and fluttering silk. Be sure that it was a gallant show, too, in that old time, when Jupiter Optimus Maximus was worshipped in Rome's Capitol, or when the more popular rites were performed for the sake of Ceres, or Venus, or Dian of the Silver Bow. And young children and maidens swelled the bright throng then, even as now, and there were song, and sparkle, and the sound of instruments that would be strange to our ears, but which made music welcome enough to the ear then, as the white bull, wreathed with roses, and with gilded horns, was led slowly through the narrow streets amidst the shouting crowd.

On, and onwards still, as if the whole feminine population of the kingdom—between the age of seven, say, and that of seven and twenty—had been pressed into the service, swept the procession. Fresh bands of music; new companies of chanting-priests, of deep-voiced deacons, whose scarlet robes were all but hidden by costly lace, awakened the echoes of the quiet streets. Chariots with bleeding hearts conspicuously borne aloft; chariots with gigantic crucifixes; chariots resplendent as the noonday sun with the lavish display of cloth of silver, and cloth of gold, and tenanted by venerated images; went lumbering by.

And still the children sang, and the diapason of the chanting rolled out like solemn thunder on the air, while at every

instant some novel feature of the ever-varying spectacle claimed its meed of praise. Prettiest, perhaps, of all the sights there was a little—a very little—child, a beautiful boy with golden curls, fantastically clad in raiment of camel's hair, and who carried a tiny cross, and led by a blue ribbon a white lamb, highly trained, no doubt, since it followed with perfect docility and exemplary meekness. A more charming model of innocent infancy than this youthful representative of John the Baptist, as with filleted head, small limbs seemingly bare, and blue eyes that never wandered to the right or left, he slowly stepped on, none of the great Italian masters ever drew. On, still on, over the flower-strewed pavement flowed the living stream, fit successor to processions of the far past, when beauty, and faith, and splendour, long since vanished like the hoar frost from the hawthorn boughs, paraded the old streets of this very town.

The spectators, I noticed, behaved very variously. There were "esprits forts" clearly among the bourgeois looking on, who seemed coldly indifferent to what they saw, if not actually hostile, and who declined to doff their hats as the holiest images and the most hallowed emblems were borne by. But the peasants, one and all, bared their heads in reverence; and the milk-woman, with her cart and her cans, had pulled her rosary, with its dark berries and brass medals, out of her capacious pocket, and was telling her beads as devoutly as her own great grandmother could have done. Forward, with the same steady pace, poured the tide of the procession, to all appearance regardless of the crowd or of the gazers who filled the windows of the houses that lined the route.

Some rivalry there may possibly have been between the different parishes which had sent forth their boys and girls, their bands and flags, and the jealously guarded treasures from crypt, and chancel, and sacristy to swell the pomp. Saint Josse, with its famed old church, to which pilgrims resort even from the banks of Loire and Rhine, could not permit itself to be outshone by fashionable Saint Jacques, where it is easy for a bland abbé, who knows the world of the salons, to collect subscriptions that are less missed by the givers than a lost bet on the races, or a luckless stake at baccarat. And Saint Ursula, grim patroness of a network of ancient streets, where aristocratic mansions of the mediæval type are elbowed by mean shops and huck-

sters' stalls, yet tries to avoid the disgrace of being overcrowded by moneyed, pushing, parvenu All Saints, where tall new houses, radiant with terra-cotta and plate glass, shelter the rich proprietors of the still taller brick chimneys that dominate a mass of workmen's dwellings on the outskirts of the parish. But such a spirit of emulation only serves to enhance the glitter of the show.

And now the clashing cymbals, and the boom and bray of the brass instruments, lately at their loudest, are hushed, that the rich thunder of the chanting may be the better heard, and the spectators press forward, or stand on tip-toe, to peer over the shoulders of those in the foremost rank. Something was plainly to be looked for that was regarded as the central pivot, or kernel, of the show. And here it comes. Surrounded by chanting priests, and preceded by scarlet-capped and white-robed acolytes swinging weighty censers, under his canopy of state borne over his head by four strong men, some dignitary of the Church goes by. He wears no mitre—not even that of a Bishop "in partibus infidelium"—and, therefore, I conjecture him to be a Dean. He is, at any rate, splendid as jewels, and gold embroidery, and antique lace can make him; and he walks beneath his gorgeous baldachin of gold and purple, chanting, too, but in a thin and reedy voice, for he is old, and his hair, silver white, contrasts somewhat plaintively with the magnificence that environs him, as amidst clouds of steaming incense he totters on. The bystanders begin to disperse, for it is getting late and cold, and the shadows are beginning to creep from darkling nooks and corners, and the spectacle is over. The procession is out of sight, and fainter and fainter grow the sounds of the music and of the chanting. The last spectator to depart was a young monk, with a pale face and dreamy eyes, clad in the brown robes of his Order, and with his tonsured head bare, who, during all this time, had knelt on the cold stones at the monastery gate, his lips moving as his lean fingers grasped his rosary, and an expression of rapt devotion on his wan countenance, that would have done credit to some hermit saint of a thousand years ago, when the crown of martyrdom was easy to find.

"Monsieur est servi en bas," said, in a German accent, the Teutonic waiter, who interrupted my reverie. It was time for my early dinner, and then for the drive to the station; but I have never regretted

that I missed the earlier train, and ever remembered with pleasure that special Christmas Eve in Belgium.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER LIII.

THERE came one awful day, the like of which no one of those hardy fisher-folk could recall. It seemed as if all the winds of heaven had combined to pour their fury upon the rock in one ceaseless, roaring blast. The great sea was lashed into frothy hillocks; sheep were blown off the headlands into the Sound; the women and children prudently kept within doors lest they might share a similar fate; the men drew their boats high up on the beach in sheltered nooks. The gale brought the fog in great rolling masses from the ocean; brought it in, swept it out again, and brought it in once more. Never since Frank had set foot on the island had he felt himself so stifled and oppressed by the fog. It was like being packed in a box filled with feathers. He began to ask all sorts of questions as to the possible risks boats would run on the open sea that night. Were shipwrecks of frequent occurrence on the coast? How far out would the beacon on the Monk Rock be seen? Would it lose half its radiance, or would the fog quench it altogether?

He got, in reply to his questions, a longer list of casualties than he expected. One man counted on the fingers of his hands eight shipwrecks he could remember, within sight of the Faroes, in less than half that number of years. Another began the narration, in glowing language, of a fog and wind-storm he could recall, when the beacon on the Monk Rock had not been visible a hundred yards out, and a big ship had struck upon the sunken pinnacle, and all hands had perished.

Frank, of necessity, lost many of the details of the terrible incident through his ignorance of the Danish tongue; but he understood enough to set him shivering, and to send him questioning the younger Christian as to what means of fog-signalling (if any) the Faroese had at command.

The man's reply was to the effect that none, so far as he knew, had ever been in use on the islands; that an imperfect method of signalling, such as horn-blowing

or gun-firing on the beach, would be as likely to do harm as good, the fog, it was well known, frequently making the sound to appear to come from an opposite direction. But he had unbounded faith in the beacon. The fog, too, might lift before night—why not? One could only hope for the best. He had lived through fog and wind in his little fishing smack in the open sea before now. Others might have equal good luck—why not?

But Frank had, somehow, in these days, lost his faith in good luck. He found it far easier to say to himself, "This is a direful day; there's ill-luck in that wind and fog for me, as well as for the poor souls who have to face it," than to say a prayer for those at sea, and turn in an hour or so earlier to shorten the dismal black hours of the night, as he had done many a time of late.

In the morning he had contrived, by keeping close under the shelter of the overhanging rocks, to get down to the beach, and had come away awe-stricken with the sense of the incapacity of man when once the wild forces of Nature, uncurbed and unbridled, are let loose on him. Towards evening, however, although the fog had thinned somewhat, going down to the beach had become an impossibility. The sea had come rushing up the thoroughfares that led down to the coast, and showed beneath the windows of the little huts an angry torrent of white foam. The path over the rocks to the light-tower still stood high and dry, but Frank noted that young Christian equipped himself in his water-proof overalls for the night-watch a full two hours earlier than usual, and that a good-sized basket of provisions was packed for him to take with him. It was not difficult to understand that he was facing the possibility of being cut off for a time from the little colony. Frank was on the alert to accompany him without delay.

"It will be my turn on duty to-morrow," he said to the man. "I had better take my chance of getting to the tower while I can."

So with lanterns and provisions the two men set off for the dismal night-watch, old Christian, from his fireside corner, nodding a sleepy approval to them between his fits of wheezing.

The pent-up coldness of the lighthouse seemed to meet and strike them on cheek and lip as they entered. Naturally, the light was their first thought. That attended to, they wrapped their rugs and

cloaks about them, and made as big a fire as due regard to the quantity of peat fuel stored would allow.

Young Christian stroked his straw-coloured beard, and made one or two monosyllabic exclamations, to which Frank replied by brief nods. Then the man lighted a pipe, drew a chair into a warm corner, crossed his legs, and indulged either in a brief snooze, or in meditation of a somnolent character.

As for Frank, chair, pipe, or meditation was alike impossible to him. Had the room been long enough to admit a backward and forward march, the chances were he would have got through close upon thirty miles that night. Young Christian suggested to him once that, as it would be his turn on duty to-morrow night, it would be as well for him to get as much rest as he could that night. Frank scouted the idea.

Even a brief half-hour of sleep seemed to him an impossibility, with that uproar of furious wind and wave without, and that turmoil of hideous apprehension within.

Every blast of roaring wind that beat against their tower, every dash of wild waves against the rock, seemed to come laden with ten thousand voices more terrible than their own.

Would the gale never die of its own fury? Would the blessed daylight never come and the dreary watch be over? It seemed to have lasted a decade of years already. Frank pulled out his watch. The hands pointed to half-past four. Why, then, another two hours at least must elapse before they could hope for the faintest streak of dawn to do battle with this inky fog!

With something of a groan he sank down on the floor beside the peat fire, supporting himself on one elbow and shielding his eyes from the smoke. An open boat on the wildest sea, he felt, would be paradise itself compared with the torture of this forced inaction.

CHAPTER LIV.

HE might have fallen asleep, perhaps; or, perhaps, there had come a lull to the turmoil of his thoughts, and, by contrast, it seemed unconsciousness.

A dull sudden boom broke across the temporary calm, and sent him to his feet with a start.

What was it? A crash, telling of some havoc wrought by the still furiously blowing gale; or was it a more awful sound

still—a signal of distress from some foundering vessel?

Young Christian had sprung to his feet at the same moment.

"What was that?" one asked the other, each feeling that he held the answer in his own heart, and that, perhaps, at that moment some score or so of poor souls were going to their graves amid the terrors of the storm.

Frank went to the look-out window in the tower, peering out into the gloom; or, rather, trying to, for nought met his gaze save the "blackness of darkness" everywhere; the black, leaping waves showing like so many inky shadows springing from a Stygian gulf as far as they dared into the world above.

"We must get a boat; we must do something," he cried desperately.

The other shook his head.

"We have no lifeboat—no boat but a lifeboat could live in that sea."

"They may be near enough for us to fire a line into them with one of your fowling-pieces, and so get a rope from them. We may do something with a rope," cried Frank, making his way rapidly down the ladder-staircase into the room below, where lamps, string, and fowling-pieces were stored.

Young Christian followed him. "That gun was fired far out at sea," he said.

"The fog muffles sound," said Frank, busy lighting the strongest hand-lamp they had in store.

"It muffles sound, and also makes it seem to come from another quarter. Now, would you say that gun came from north, south, east, or west?" said the other.

"They'll fire again—we shall tell better next time," answered Frank, opening the door and making his way out upon the rock, lamp in hand.

But, for all the use it was, he might just as well have left the lamp behind him. A dense wall of fog barred them in; over the darkness came the roaring of the northeaster, bringing with it the rush and swirl of the waters which swamped the thoroughfares running inland.

At the peril of their lives they ran along the edge of the rock, in the teeth of the driving gale. They fired fowling-piece after fowling-piece into the black fog, hoping for an answering gun to show that their signals were heard.

But though they waited out there in the cutting blast with straining ears for an hour or more, never an answering gun came athwart the racket of wind and wave.

"Heaven help them, whoever they are," said Frank, firing his last shot into the air, "they are beyond our help now."

CHAPTER LV.

OUT on the broad Atlantic, the little ship "Frea" had done brave battle with the tempest. She had got well away from the Scotch coast, had steamed past the Shetland Isles, and was almost in sight of the Faroes, when the storm had broken forth in its full fury. It had snapped the mast as though it were a willow wand, torn its one sail into ribbons, and swept it away like a handful of dust.

The little vessel had lumbered heavily from side to side, rolling like a log in the deep troughs of the sea.

Uncle Archie grew apprehensive.

"It's her way of doing things; she's like some people, you know—takes life heavily, but she's none the less to be relied on," said the Captain cheerily, jealous for the honour of his little craft.

But later on in the day as the gale, instead of abating, steadily increased in strength, he grew less cheery, and his voice was only heard giving short, sharp orders to his crew.

Once, towards midnight, Uncle Archie thought he heard the words "driven out of our course—we must go wherever the wind takes us now;" but the deafening turmoil wind and wave kept up prevented his being certain.

Towards daybreak matters grew worse. The sky was wild, the rain came down in buckets. Big seas broke over the deck, rushing down the hatchway into the cabin where Joyce had been bidden to remain. The lifeboat hanging in the davits was swept away, and worse fate of all, the skylight of the engine-room was smashed at the same moment by the fury of the blast.

After this all was consternation, though, thanks to the good seamanship of the Captain and crew, there was no confusion. The engineer came up reporting that the fires were out, and that they were up to their middle in water below; another man rushed forward crying that the ship was filling through the openings in the deck.

The signal gun was at once fired, in case help was to be had from some passing vessel. Then there came the hurried order to man the remaining boat. Joyce heard her name called desperately by Uncle Archie, and rushing up from the cabin found herself caught in someone's arm and lifted into the boat where some four or five

sailors were already seated. Uncle Archie and Morton took their places beside her, the boat was lowered rapidly though cautiously, the remainder of the crew leaped in from the mizen chains, followed last of all by the Captain.

All was hurry, confusion, and bewilderment to Joyce. From the time that the order to man the boat had been given to the time when the men with their oars pressed the boat off from the sides of the sinking steamer, only about five minutes had elapsed. In that five minutes they had been nearer death than ever they had been in their lives before.

They realised this as, carried away on the crest of a mountainous wave, they turned to give a farewell look to the battered steamer. She lay on her side now, the black line of her hull showed for one moment between the masses of madly-dashing waves; the next the black line was altogether gone, the funnel only showing dark between the white, foaming spray. Another big wave carried the little boat onward; when they lifted their eyes next not a vestige of the "Frea" was to be seen.

After gratitude for their own present safety, came the anxious thought if the big boat had been unable to live through the gale, what about the little boat?

In good truth their danger was not fanciful. Out there in the open sea they had not the fog that begirt the Faroes—that began where the waters of the Gulf Stream met the colder waters of the ocean—but it was pitch-dark; there were neither stars nor moon; the wind was furious; and every moment the big seas sweeping down upon them threatened to engulf them.

Without excellent seamanship the little boat could not have lived in that sea for twenty minutes. But excellent seamanship they had. The Captain had a cool, clear head, every one of the sailors was an "old salt," and knew well enough what he was about.

The Captain took his place at the helm, giving his orders distinctly. The men were to row in spells, and those who did not row were to bale out the water, which threatened every moment to swamp them. This was by no means light work, only one baler had been thrown into the boat on starting, and hats and caps had to be called into requisition. It was bitterly cold, the wind was piercing, hands and arms speedily grew benumbed and chill. After all, the rowing seemed the lighter work of the two. Morton worked away at the baling briskly and bravely, rolling up his

shirt sleeves to the elbow, making a scarlet pocket-handkerchief do duty for his fur cap, and earning such high encomiums from the Captain that the worthy man began to think that after all he had mistaken his vocation and would have made a better sailor than detective. Poor old Uncle Archie did his best, but his limbs were stiff, and it was quickly evident that his task told upon him.

"Someone must keep a look-out for the big waves with the white crests," said the Captain, looking at the old man. So he volunteered for the duty, sitting back to back with the others, and Joyce, taking from his hand the baler he had in use, possibly found the work lighter than he had done.

So they tossed about in the dark, at the mercy of wind and wave. Where they were they knew not. They only knew they were being driven before a strong north-easter, it might be towards the coast of Iceland, it might be towards the dangerous Shetland shoals. Their only safety they knew lay in keeping to the open sea. To be dashed upon the shore in that gale could mean but one thing for them all. Perhaps when daylight broke, they might sight a sail or find themselves in happy proximity to land. If not, Heaven help them, with not so much as a flask of fresh water among them nor tin of hard biscuit.

A sailor in the darkness asked if anyone had an idea of the time. The Captain pulled out his watch. Joyce thought it must be close upon day-dawn—that darkest hour she knew so well.

It was too dark to see the face of the watch; but, feeling for the hands, the Captain said he thought it must be between five and six.

Suddenly Joyce dropped her baler, leaning back silently against Uncle Archie's shoulder.

"Poor child, poor child!" he said pityingly, "you are worn out—shivering—wet through and through."

Even as he spoke the back-water of a big wave, whose full force they had backed to escape, came over them, a great furious shower drenching them to the skin.

For a few minutes the work of baling went on silently and vigorously, Joyce doing her best with the others.

Then she leaned back heavily upon Uncle Archie, again whispering to him over his shoulder: "Uncle Archie, tell me, do you see anything?"

"Anything? A light or boat, do you

mean? I wish to Heaven I could!" moaned the old man; "but beyond the black outline of the big mountains of waves I can see nothing."

"Nothing!"

"Do you mean the phosphorescence on the sea, Joyce? I can see that thankfully enough, for where we should be without it in this inky darkness I'm sure I don't know."

"Only that?"

Uncle Archie thought a moment. Joyce might have another meaning. His voice dropped as he answered.

"Do you mean the last pitiful sight we saw, child? The waves leaping and dashing over our poor little steamer as it rolled over and disappeared in the darkness? Ah! I shall see that sight with my eyes open or shut to the last day of my life."

Joyce said no more. She was still leaning heavily against Uncle Archie's shoulder. He could feel the full throbbing of her heart, the deep drawing of her breath.

He began to grow alarmed. Was she giving way at last? After all these months of heroic endurance was she going to confess herself beaten, worn out?

"Child, child," he said, "don't give way like this—for me, for my sake hold out a little longer."

But still Joyce said nothing.

"Speak, my dear," he went on nervously. "Do you see anything? Has something frightened you? Have you lost your courage at last?"

Joyce roused herself with an evident effort.

"Frightened, Uncle Archie, no! I never felt myself safer in my life. Never for one hour since Mab died have I lost the sense of her presence; but I never felt her so near as I do now. A moment ago I felt her so close to me that I wondered at myself for not seeing her. I fancied you—everyone in the boat—must see her beside me. I thought something must be wrong with my eyes—that they must be 'holden' as once the disciples' were—"

"My dear, my dear!" moaned Uncle Archie, fearing that Joyce's brains were leaving her.

"It's true, Uncle Archie," and now Joyce's voice, as it grew lower grew strangely sweet and solemn, "and if I saw a score of angels spreading their wings over the boat I could not feel safer. One way or another, I feel it is all ending now, and whichever way it ends,"—this even more solemnly than before—"I know it is all right."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 948. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Domie Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER II.

"BUT I WOULD—LIVE!"

LISSCHEN woke with a start, and sat bolt upright, and looked round with the defiant, terribly wide-awake stare of a person who would say: "Tell me I have been napping, if you dare!"

Her charge was sitting at a little distance off—her slender fingers busy weaving a garland of daisies and wild grasses—the sunbeams playing at hide-and-seek over her golden hair, and the pretty curves and lines of her girlish figure.

Lisschen's sharp eyes saw nothing amiss. She rose to her feet and looked at the slanting sun-rays.

"We must be getting home, child," she said in her gruff voice. "It grows late."

"I am ready," said Gretchen, rising, and slinging her pretty garland on her arm.

The old woman looked sharply at her. There was so glad a ring in her voice, so bright a light in her face—a change, faint and indescribable, but yet a change. It was not possible that she could know that the wheel of Life's fate had been set in motion during her own brief period of slumber; and yet a suspicion leapt into life, and fastened itself upon her heart with something near akin to fear.

"You have had a long sleep, Lisschen," went on the girl merrily. "No doubt you were tired, and the afternoon was hot. Even the birds were quiet."

"I have not slept," cried the old woman sharply. "I did but close my eyes from the sun, while you were gather-

ing your flowers." Then those same eyes turned again to the radiant young face. "Why do you smile so?" she asked suspiciously. "What have you seen or done that pleases you so?"

"Nay, Lisschen," said the girl, dimpling with happy laughter. "If you have been awake this hour past, you know all I have seen and done."

The woman gave a short grunt, and twisted her neglected knitting into a hard ball.

"Come," she said, "we waste time talking, and the gnädige Frau will be home from Vienna if we hurry not."

She trotted off without ceremony, her sharp eyes glancing from side to side as if in search of some suspicious object. The girl walked beside her in a vain endeavour to curb the exuberance of her spirits. Her feet seemed to dance along the path; her lips were perpetually breaking into smiles; snatches of joyous little songs left her ever and anon. Even cross old Lisschen could scarce resist the fascination of her blithe and jocund mood.

"I don't know what pleases you," she said at last. "One would think the Wood-Fairy had been with you."

"Perhaps she has," laughed the girl merrily. "I was speaking to her when you had your eyes closed. Lisschen, I marvel you did not hear us talk."

"There was—someone, then," said the old woman sharply; "who was it?"

"Don't look so cross, and I will tell you," said Gretchen coaxingly, slipping her arm into that of the grim old servitor. "Ah, Lisschen, you were a young girl once, and pretty, I am sure; and doubtless Fritz thought so, before he went to that cruel war and was killed. Now, leave off frowning and listen. I must tell someone, and I would rather tell you, even if you're cross."

"Well, well," said the old woman more amiably, "have thy way. Thou art a tiresome child, but I will listen; only do not fancy I was asleep in the woods. I knew thou wert speaking to someone."

"Indeed, you were asleep, sound asleep, good Lisschen. But no matter. I did but speak to a poor, blind gentleman, whose servant had left him. And I suppose you heard all we said, did you not, Lisschen?"

"A blind man?" muttered the old woman, "no great harm there."

Indeed, she was rather uneasy at her own negligence of her charge, having always had strict injunctions never to allow Gretchen to exchange words with any stranger, whether man or woman.

"Harm? Of course there was no harm!" cried the girl indignantly. "I wonder when I am to be treated like other people, or allowed to exchange words with a human creature outside the house. Oh, Lisschen, why is it that no one loves me there?—and yet they won't give me the chance of loving anyone else."

"Hush!" cried the old woman, alarmed at the passionate outburst; "talk not so foolishly, child. You—what do you want with love? You are not for the world—you know that—nor for the company of friend and folk outside your own; you have heard that often enough. Take it to heart then, and try to be content."

"But I can't be content," said the girl rebelliously. "I am young, and life looks so beautiful, and I want to enjoy it. Why should I not?"

"Because," said the old woman, her voice strangely troubled, "there are sins that fall on innocent heads, and wrongs that Heaven visits on other lives beside those to whom reparation belongs. Nay, ask no more. Thy life is a life born under black shadows—a shame and a sorrow to those with whom thy lot is cast. To offer it to Heaven is the best use to which it may be put. Think not of friends, or pleasure, or love; such things can only be a curse to thee—nothing more."

She had spoken so fiercely, with such suppressed passion, and yet such an unwilling sorrow for the sorrow her words wrought, that Gretchen looked at her in momentary wonder, seeming to trace some hidden vein of tenderness or emotion beneath this usually frozen surface.

Tears rose slowly to her eyes. Could any fate more cruel, any life more repugnant, be offered to one in whom the very

light, and joy, and beauty of spring itself, seemed centred?

"It is very cruel," she said at last, the tears banished by a sudden flame of anger. "I, surely, might have some voice in the matter. Oh!" she added, her whole soul shaken with passionate yearning, "if my mother had but lived she would not have treated me so unjustly; she would not at least have denied me such rights as belong to the commonest creatures on earth—air, freedom, sunshine, love. I had better have died when she did, than have lived for such a fate."

"To live as you wish might be a harder fate," said Lisschen; "there is always sorrow in the world—and the love of which you talk is only a pitfall and a snare."

"No matter!" said the girl defiantly, throwing back her bright head and looking up with glowing eyes to where the sunlight touched the heights. "No matter! I would risk them—dare them—defy them—but I would—live!"

The old woman looked at her in amazement. She had never heard such words from the childish lips, or seen such defiance in the childish face. It thrilled her with pity; for none knew better than herself that the feminine creature does not exist who can dare or defy the ills of such fate as comes to one who is beautiful, and nameless, and unloved.

They had left the wood now, and stood on a little hill from which could be seen the village of Neu-Waldegg, with its white houses and winding road, and the afternoon sunlight resting warm and bright on many a quaint old gabled roof. The call of a cuckoo sounded from a neighbouring bough, as it stood swaying among the budding blooms. Everywhere beauty and brilliance glowed warm and bright; and the girl who stood there with her wistful face turned homewards, might have well impersonated the very Goddess of Spring itself.

The woman looked at her with the softness of a sudden regret in her dim eyes, then hurried on, leaving the girl to follow as she would.

At the little restaurant below, a group of people were seated at the tables, some drinking milk, others smoking, and chattering, and laughing under the shady trees. A flock of pigeons, white and coloured, fluttered about the ground, or picked up the crumbs of black bread tossed to them by the women.

Seated at one of the tables, Lisschen noticed a young man. He had a fair skin, and bright, soft hair; he held a rough stick in his hand; round the upper part of his face, and concealing his eyes, was bound a black silk handkerchief; a soft felt hat shaded his features.

For a moment the woman paused and looked at him. A man with a dark, olive-skinned face and deferential bearing, advanced from the trees bearing a glass of milk on a small tray, which he placed beside the young fellow.

Lisschen saw the quick turn of the head, and heard the lazy, musical voice murmur some words. She stood quite still as if turned to stone.

When the sound of light footsteps made her turn, she seized the arm of her young charge, while one brown, shaking hand pointed at the figures under the trees.

"Is that the blind man?" she asked hoarsely.

"Yes," said Gretchen, colouring with sudden, shy delight.

"And he is an Englishman, and young. What a misfortune!" ejaculated Lisschen in horror. "Child," and she grasped the girl's slender arm so fiercely that it hurt her, "as you value the little liberty you have, speak not of this at home. Ah, surely the Evil One himself must have put it into my head to sleep this afternoon, of all others."

And before the astonished girl could speak a word, Lisschen hurried her past the little tables and the scattered groups, nor ever slackened speed till they reached the steep, roughly-paved street, which runs from Neu-Waldegg to Dornbach.

"Why do you all hate the English so?" asked Gretchen, panting and breathless, as the old woman at last moderated her pace.

"No matter," said Lisschen, "you will know some day."

"Some day," echoed the girl restlessly, "what use is that? I want to know now."

For to the young "some day" is as though one said "never." But Lisschen did not remember that, so long it was since Youth had been with her.

CHAPTER III.

PYRAMUS AND THISBE.

THE houses in Dornbach are wonderfully alike. One long, winding road—rough, and stony, and ill-paved—runs through the village, and straight on to the tramway lines that connect the little suburb

with the bright, beautiful Austrian capital beyond. The houses on the right of the Hauptstrasse stand under the shelter of sloping hills, thickly wooded and very beautiful. In one of these houses lived the Herr von Waldstein and his unmarried daughter, sister to the unfortunate mother of Gretchen.

They were stern, proud, exclusive people. They mixed with no society; entertained no visitors; and went nowhere, except to the church, or occasionally to Vienna.

The every-day life of a German household is, at best, a dreary affair; but, situated as Gretchen was, her existence was doubly melancholy. It would have been unendurable but for the girl's brightness of disposition and sweet content—traits which might have won love from any hearts; but which, strange to say, only served to put her further and further away from the affections of her natural protectors.

Her education had been at the Convent; her only companions the grim and austere sisterhood. The severest creeds; the sternest self-discipline; the most bigoted faith, had alone been set before her. And yet, with all this, so intense was that exuberance of joyous youth; so rich was that mine of imagination, poetry, and feeling, within her fresh young soul, that again and again she escaped from the hard tenets and unlovely teaching of her captors, and soared free and joyous above the level of their tyranny.

It was the morning after her meeting with the Englishman in the woods of Neu-Waldegg. The sun was flooding her little bare room with its warm, abundant rays; outside in the garden the birds were all awake, and chattering and gossiping in free and friendly fashion.

The girl sprang up; her eyes bright as stars, her long hair flooding the pillow with its billows of gold. She was wide awake, and took a brief survey of the light and radiance which was tempting her from sleep.

"I will go and do some gardening," she thought, and forthwith sprang from the bed, and with rapid fingers made her morning toilet.

Certainly the girl had little or no vanity. Had it been otherwise, she might well have been pardoned for dwelling with delight on the picture she made.

Her cheeks glowed like rose petals; her lips were dimpled round with smiles at some thought that pleased her; her lovely

hair curled and rippled from her brow, and fell in thick masses nearly to her feet. The curves of her slight, young form would have enchanted a painter, as would the soft, white throat, and rounded arms, and little, lovely hands. But, enchanting as was the picture she made, Gretchen certainly gave it scant attention. The heavy hair was brushed rapidly, and with rather an impatience of its enviable length and thickness, tucked back behind the shell-like ears, and plaited into its usual tail; a few rebellious rings and curls were smoothed rigorously away from the white temple, only to struggle back again and soften the outlines of the sweet, young face. Her grey linen dress was thrown on and buttoned with hasty fingers; then she snatched up a little white handkerchief and tied it over her head, knelt for a few moments before the tiny bracket that held an image of the Virgin and a wooden cross, and then went with swift, light steps down the polished stairs, and let herself out by a back door into the garden.

The garden was a large one; it ran far back from the house, and almost to the base of the wooded hills that surround Dornbach. She ran down the gravel path and past the blossoming fruit trees, and on to the very end of the precincts, where she had her own particular plot of ground, cultivated with that ardour that was characteristic of herself and everything she undertook.

Hoeing, and weeding, and digging, and raking; peering now and then into some green calyx; watching the industrious course of some noisily buzzing bee; listening to the glad song of some bird high up among the lofty boughs; so she loved to spend the bright morning hours, so she proposed to spend them now.

Unconsciously to herself her own voice broke into song when her feathered favourite ceased. A sweet, gay little snatch of melody expressive enough of light heart and joyous spirits.

It was a surprise to her when, at the end of that little outburst, a voice near at hand, and yet proceeding from no visible source, said softly, "Fräulein Gretchen!"

In vain the girl's startled eyes searched above and around; no one was visible. Again, however, the same voice breathed the same words.

"Who is it?" demanded the girl sharply, standing quite motionless now with the rake in her hand, and her eyes eager and questioning.

"Don't be frightened. Have you forgotten yesterday? You see my memory is better. I knew your voice at once."

"The Herr Engländer!" fell breathlessly from the girl's lips. "But where are you then?"

"In the next garden. I find I am living next door to you. I told you my man had taken rooms for me in Dornbach. There is a gate here; it leads into the woods. Have you one also?"

"Yes; but it is locked."

"Confound it," muttered the young man in English. "If you could get out we might go into the woods and have a talk," he added in her own language. "But, tell me first, were they angry with you for speaking to me yesterday?"

"They do not know," said the girl, her colour coming and going swiftly with the excitement of this unexpected meeting. "I told Lisschen, and she bade me keep it to myself."

"Wise Lisschen! And you will?"

"I told you before, they hate your nation—it would only anger them."

"It is very foolish of them," said the young Englishman. "Why should they hate us?"

"I cannot tell."

"I hope," he said, "you won't follow their bad example. I should be sorry."

"I do not hate—anybody," she answered, lifting up so radiant a face that it was a pity he could not see it.

"That is right—but I wish you would come into the woods and talk to me. It is rather tiresome to have to converse in this Pyramus and Thisbe fashion. Do not you think so?"

"Who were they?" asked the girl, evading a direct answer.

"Do you mean to say you never heard of Pyramus and Thisbe? Let me come to you and I will tell you the story."

"I love stories!" cried the girl eagerly. "But—I can't come into the woods to hear it—indeed I can't!"

"Then may I come to your gate and talk to you?"

For a moment Gretchen hesitated; some sense of that unwritten law which breathes its wisdom into even the most perfect innocence, bade her be cautious now.

"How is it you can tell the way?" she asked evasively.

"I can just remove my bandage for a moment; my sight is getting better every day. May I come?"

"I have no right to prevent your using

the wood," she said, colouring shyly. "But I think it is not quite—right—is it? They would be angry if they knew I spoke to you—or, indeed, to any stranger."

"Then they are very unjust and uncharitable," said the young man impetuously. "And I am—coming, Fräulein Gretchen!"

He suited the action to the word, unlatched the gate, crossed the intervening space, and was at her own gate in a moment.

The girl threw down her rake, and went to meet him. They were completely shut out from sight of the house, even had those watchful and jealous guardians of the girl been stirring. But it was far too early for that, being, indeed, scarcely five o'clock. He put out his hand, and Gretchen gave him hers. There was no disfiguring bandage about his eyes; they looked at her as never eyes had looked before.

He was thinking how far lovelier she was than even he had thought her the previous day, thinking, too, that never again would he see a spring morning, or feel the rich sweet scents of fresh-turned earth and dewy flowers, without seeing, too, this one face, with its beautiful youth and gravely innocent eyes, look back at him from the picture.

For a moment only had the girl let her hand rest in his. She was quite silent; her eyes studying his face with the intent and serious gaze of a child who sees something new and strange.

It was a very handsome face, if somewhat effeminate by reason of that fair skin and soft bright hair, and a certain weakness or shortness of vision that gave the eyelids a tendency to droop.

"Well?" he said at last, and smiled.

She started and drew her hand away. "Was I rude?—forgive me, please. I was thinking how glad—oh, how very, very, glad you must be to see all—this—again!"

Her hand gave a little comprehensive gesture which he followed.

"Glad! ah, that I am!" he said, "after all that long darkness to look up at sky, and trees, and sunshine. It is like life—health—freedom, when all seemed about to be lost. Glad! well—it is a poor word to express what I felt and feel. Every voice is like a friend's, and every face is beautiful."

Those eyes rested on her as he spoke with an eloquence that seemed to flash light and warmth into her soul, and fill it with new and varied feelings.

But the glance was not for long. He drew from his pocket a pair of glasses and put them on.

"The light is too brilliant as yet," he said. "You must forgive my looking hideous, mein Fräulein; my new possession is too precious to be risked for even such an excuse as your face."

The language of compliment was new to her. She did not even heed his words.

"The glasses make you look very funny," she said, "but you are right to be careful. Shall you have to wear them always?"

"Oh no, only for a short time! But come, don't trouble about me any longer. Do you still wish to hear your story?"

"Ah, yes!" she said eagerly. "Please begin, I have heard so few—except about the saints—and I am not allowed to read any books, except history, and philosophy, and religious treatises."

She stood resting her arms on the gate, the swaying boughs above throwing a thousand lights and shadows on her bright face and cool, grey dress.

"Well," said the young man gently, "Pyramus and Thisbe were two unfortunate lovers, separated by cruel destiny. Do you know what lovers are, mein Fräulein?"

"No," she said seriously, "unless you mean what Fritz was to Lisschen—someone she was fond of and going to marry."

He laughed.

"I didn't give Lisschen credit for so near an approach to anything feminine as the weakness of contemplating marriage," he said. "But you are not far wrong; only these lovers could not contemplate matrimony, except through the crannies of a thick wall that separated them from each other. A hard fate ruled their destinies. They used to come one on one side of the wall and one on the other, and hold serious converse through a chink. Love, you know, has laughed at barriers ever since Eros first fluttered his silver wings on the heights of Olympus. But then, I suppose, your priests don't allow you any knowledge of the heathen deities."

"No," she said simply. "Were they very wicked?"

"Some of them were most decidedly wicked," he answered with becoming gravity. "It was on these Olympian heights, you know, that Cupid had his birth, and he is certainly the most mischievous and dangerous of any of the gods. There are a thousand pretty legends and stories of them; I could lend you any

amount, but I suppose you wouldn't be allowed to read them."

He went on with the story, glancing ever and anon at the girl's absorbed face, with a sense of wonder that what was so old and stale to him could so enthral and entertain another.

Then at her request for more stories, he told her of Hercules and Omphale; of Apollo and Daphne; of Persephone, and Psyche, and Ariadne; and the girl listened with beating heart and scarlet cheeks, and all her soul seemed to catch the fire of this strange enchantment that alike had come to god and mortal, bringing sorrow and suffering in its train, yet with one hour of its immortal glory repaying the purchase-right of the hearts it cursed.

It was dangerous teaching for one ardent, imaginative, enthusiastic as herself. Far more dangerous than her teacher knew, as her innocent, eager questioning led him on and on, over what was a very old and beaten track to him. It certainly was to his credit that he clothed the stories he related in the most delicate language and the most fanciful imagery, so that the girl's pure mind caught no shadow of another meaning than her own pure and lofty fancies bestowed.

A full hour passed, and both were engrossed still in their occupation; indeed, there is no knowing how much longer it might have lasted, but for the click of the neighbouring gate and the sound of approaching footsteps. Gretchen started like one in a dream. Her companion turned his head impatiently.

"Is it you, Bari?" he said.

"Yes, Monsieur," the man answered respectfully, and touching his hat as his dark eyes rested curiously on the beautiful girl to whom his master had been speaking.

"I fear I must bid you farewell for the present," said the young Englishman reluctantly, as his eyes turned to the girl's eager face. In a lower voice he whispered hurriedly: "Be here to-morrow at the same time, I implore you."

Then he placed his hand in the man's arm, and went back into the shade of the woods.

"Bari," he said, as soon as they were out of earshot, "you have done a good many things for me since you have been in my service, and I don't think you have found me ungenerous. Now listen. I want you to find out everything you can about these neighbours of ours. Do you hear? It ought not to be difficult—for you."

"Yes, Monsieur," the man answered calmly. "I will do my best."

"There is some mystery about—about that young lady," continued his master, restlessly. "I am interested in her, you understand?"

A faint smile quivered over the closed, thin lips.

"I understand, Monsieur, perfectly. It is a—private—matter, I suppose? I mean your uncle——"

"Good Heavens! Not a word to my uncle!" cried the young fellow energetically. "There is no need for him to know."

"No, Monsieur, of course not."

Again that strange smile flickered over the thin lips, and lighted the somewhat sinister eyes. Perhaps it was a pity that Neale Kenyon's own eyes were less observant of this face than of Gretchen's. Had they not been so, he would have considered twice before putting a trust into keeping so untrustworthy, or bestowing so dangerous a confidence in one of whom he knew so little as he knew of this man. Bari had been selected and engaged for him by his uncle. He was an intelligent man—made as good a courier as a valet, and was to all intents and purposes both honest and trustworthy. An Italian by birth, he professed himself a mere cosmopolitan; spoke many languages, and all equally well; and had proved himself invaluable to Neale Kenyon during his terrible affliction.

It had not occurred to the young man that Bari might become obnoxious, or obtrusive; that, if he so chose, he could play the spy only too well, and make the uncle pay for information which the nephew had already bought as confidence.

Neale Kenyon was far too careless to allow of any foothold for suspicion. There was nothing heroic about him; nothing that in any way set him apart from, or above his fellow man. He had been always a spoilt child of Fortune, and his blindness had brought him even more than its share of compassion, help, and tenderness. He was generous, but then generosity cost him nothing. He had inherited a small fortune from his mother, and was heir to the baronetcy held now by his uncle, Sir Roy Kenyon. This uncle had been his sole guardian, and was devotedly fond of the lad, denying him nothing, and fostering the weak points of a somewhat weak character by a systematic indulgence.

Sir Roy and his daughter Alexis were

Neale's nearest relatives, and their house had been his ever since his boyhood. They had spent the greater part of the winter with him in Vienna, but had returned to England when the operation had been pronounced successful, leaving Neale to travel where and how he pleased under the care of Léon Bari.

One caution alone had been administered to the Italian by the Baronet.

"If you see any signs of my nephew committing any follies in the shape of falling in love, at once communicate with me. A little casual flirtation is all very well, but the young gentleman is to marry his cousin. That fact must be kept before him. Remember, Bari, I trust you."

The wily Italian assured the Baronet of his ability to guard his young master's interests, and having received a handsome "tip" for the promise, resolved in his own mind that it depended on that master himself to keep any of his peccadilloes from the ears or knowledge of his guardian. It was satisfactory to be able to draw a salary from both, besides affording an opportunity for the exercise of those diplomatic talents on which he prided himself.

As yet no such opportunity had offered itself. To-day, however, Bari saw the first opening on that road to fortune, which he had assured himself lay in the mastery of the weak and generous-minded youth whom in his heart he rather despised.

To-day he saw Neale Kenyon roused and interested in something beyond the immediate pale of his own interests. To-day he would brace his energies and set his wits to work. If Bari had a weak point, it was pride in his own intellect, in his quickness, penetration, and secrecy.

"I would have made a great diplomat," he would say to himself. "There is no saying what I might not rise to, even now, if only I had not learnt that, for me, obscurity is safety."

And with that caution his brow would cloud, and the pulse of an ominous fear beat in his breast.

Whatever he had to do with the secrets of others, Léon Bari could keep his own securely enough. And to this man Neale Kenyon had entrusted the discovery of that mystery respecting Gretchen von Waldstein!

ON THE ICE.

ALTHOUGH people who are agreed about nothing else will generally unite to abuse our British climate, yet there is one thing

to be said for it, on the whole it gives good skating. If you have elsewhere more continuous and reliable frost, as in Canada, that frost is also accompanied by a weight of snow which bars the great stretches of ice to skaters, and drives the latter to their sheltered rinks. And rink skating may be an art or a pastime; but it cannot be called a sport, as open-air skating may fairly claim to be, any more than chasing a tame deer round the area of the Hippodrome, with whatever flourish of horns or baying of dogs, can be called hunting. Now, though our climate is variable, it varies chiefly in the direction of rigour, and few winters pass without giving some chance to the skaters. A writer of experience from the Fens assures us that, during a quarter of a century or so, only one winter was an absolute blank to him, as far as skating was concerned, and that, even during this exasperatingly mild season, he might have secured one day's skating had he been sufficiently on the alert.

There is a wonderful charm about the Fens in a fine hard winter, with the white plain of snow, and the dark lines marked out along the numerous cuts and channels, where the skaters are whirling along, making a tremulous murmur in the air. The sluggish rivers are fairly at rest; barges and hoys rest by the banks, all frozen into stiff immobility, and black and fragrant with fresh tar. The ferries are changed to icy bridges, where strenuous labourers strew a footing of straw, and levy irregular tolls on the passers-by. From the old-fashioned, high-crowned brick bridges a view may be had of the whole scene; while the village close at hand—with its handsome old church, whose dark pinnacles are outlined in snow—affords a comfortable hostelry, where the ale is good, and where the talk is all of skating and its champions past and present.

It must be noted, however, that these Fen skaters are a trifle intolerant. There is but one style of skating worthy of the name, and that is the Fen style. Figure-skaters these men look down upon; their graceful, fantastic evolutions are so much foolishness. When the Laureate writes down one of his heroes as

Tired out

With cutting eights that day upon the pond,

the verdict in the Fens is that it served him right, and that a Lincolnshire man should have known better than to be

cutting foolish cyphers on a miserable pond, when the whole scope and range of the Fens were open to him. But to the bulk of skaters who have only ponds to disport upon, of what use is it to descant upon the delights of running head-foremost at top speed for miles and miles? Now a pond of some kind is within reach of everybody, and hence the feats that may be done upon a pond are justly most esteemed by the general body of skaters.

And a pond, after all, is not to be despised—the Round Pond, we will say, with ruddy old Kensington Palace glowing through the haze, where here and there a window flashes back a ray of winter sunshine. As the wintry scene unfolds itself, an amphitheatre of snow and ice, hedged in with the tracery of bare leafless trees, a cheerful murmur fills the air, the whirr of skaters on the ice, the shouts of children, the lusty cries of the chair and broom brigade, which increase in volume as the margin of the pool is reached.

"Here y'are, lady, put your skates on, lady! Try a pair, sir, for a nour." More skilful tacticians vary the cry. "Here y'are, me lady," may prove to be more flattering to the social dignity of the fair one with the golden locks, who is hesitating as to the choice of a skate-fitter. Whence come these children of the frost and snow, grizzled, shabby, and hungry-looking, with their chairs, their carpet, their stock of skates for hire, who ply their trade with as much tact and nonchalance as if they had been working at the business all their lives?

From every side out of the surrounding haze appear groups of people hurrying to the scene, and already the pond is well crowded, while at the edges where the ice has been broken away, the water wells up intermittently as people sway to and fro. All the world is upon skates, or is having its skates put on—children in shoals, young men and young women, even elderly ladies. Here is a pretty governess, with a tribe of jolly little people to whom she is teaching the art of skating, as one of the accomplishments of her repertoire; there a group of youths, lanky and hungry-looking, who are wisely taking out the enforced leisure of hard times in vigorous exercise. Striking out with deliberate care, comes a stout, middle-aged man, with a yellow face and wide sandy beard, contrasting with the fresh, closely-clipped faces of the surrounding youth. Twenty years under Indian skies have made changes in

the stout gentleman's centre of gravity. Often, simmering in his bungalow, he has cooled himself by thinking of the frosty pleasures of his home life, and has promised himself skating galore for his first English winter. But now he finds even the outside edge forwards a little too much for his nerve; small boys beg him not to tumble till they are safely out of the way; the tone of the crowd is rather free to one who has been accustomed to move about amid profuse salaams; our Indian subsides into a chair with a sigh of relief and regret.

Now comes a young woman in severe and simple, almost masculine attire, attended by young fellows neat and compact, skimming easily along, but as if it were something of a penance, with an air of gloom that seems to say, "No hunting till the frost breaks." Again in more coquettish costume, a couple of damsels whose graceful undulations suggest the corps de ballet; while a serene young woman of fashion circles calmly here and there, as if she had the pond to herself, and she is followed by a bevy of rosy, laughing school-girls who tumble, pick each other up, and clatter along with gaiety unsubdued by falls and bruises.

But the general crowd are intent upon getting along as best they may. Certain young ladies remarked to Mr. Winkle, the motion is so graceful, so swan-like. But the first steps of the neophyte are not exactly graceful. The treacherous irons seem to baffle every attempt to move in the right direction. Now they dart forward, and land their owner on his back; again they slip backwards, and the beginner saves himself or herself, as the case may be, at somebody else's expense; both waltz round for a moment, and then are mixed up in a general fall. A plucky lad scrambles along determined to do or die, now up, now down, but gaining experience with every fall; his little sister with long flowing mane and crimson stockings totters cautiously along. More teachable is she, and practises her steps and turns her toes out to command, and will learn her lesson with half the tumbles and bruises that fall to her reckless brother.

Half a century and more ago, when Queen Victoria was a pretty smiling child, and lived in a corner of the big red Palace yonder, no doubt she would be driven in her little pony chaise well wrapped up in furs to see the skaters. There was a vast difference then in the scene upon the ice.

We may realise this if we glance at a steel engraving, the frontispiece to the "Skaters' Handbook" of 1832. The scene is a long piece of water surrounded by trees. Four gentlemen in frocks or swallow tails, with frilled shirt fronts and polished Hessian boots, disport upon the ice, each with his left hand in the air, performing some graceful figure. Along the margin of the pool a crowd of spectators watch their evolutions with steadfast admiration. Women in enormous coal-scuttle bonnets, wrapped in ermine tippets, with immense fur muffs; boys with hoops, girls in frills and furs form an appreciative gallery for the performers, or, in the words of the guide, for "mercurial figures which glide past in the fitful scene. The pleasurable feelings of the skater, alternately exchanging a word with his brethren in the throng, and then giving a furtive glance at the angelic face of beauty in her furs," may be better imagined than described. And all the time the crowd looks on admiringly, but without the slightest notion of sharing in the fun.

Long after this the winter scene on the Round Pond had something of the air of a fashionable gathering; the Skating Club performed all the latest flourishes upon the ice; and a goodly contingent from the Horse Guards Barracks—Captain Jack Belsize, Crackthorpe, and the rest, assisted at the solemnity, while a noble and distinguished gathering looked on. We have now changed all that. Nobody goes to the Parks in these days to witness fine skating, for the clubs and fine performers have retired to private waters; and instead of looking on, the world in general puts on skates and performs for its own amusement; and thus the scene is now more jolly, free, and democratic.

There is some danger, by the way, that, in the universal prevalence of skating, the old-fashioned art of sliding may sink into oblivion, such artistic sliding as that of Sam Weller, for instance—"knocking at the cobbler's door," that is "skimming over the ice on one foot and occasionally giving a postman's knock upon it with the other." Small boys, indeed, get up a slide among themselves; but those long and glistening tracks, jealously guarded from the incursions of skaters, along which it required a stout heart and a thick pair of nailed boots to launch oneself successfully, are now rarely to be met with.

Yet, till the Restoration, sliding was the winter diversion of the fashionable

young men of the day as well as of the crowd.

The gallants dancing at the river's side.
They bath in summer, and in winter slide.

We may look upon the "new canal" in St. James's Park, to which these lines refer, as the original seat of skating. The Fennemen, indeed, claim to have practised the art with consummate skill from time immemorial, and it seems probable that, as long as skating was practised in Holland, so it would be also known in the little Holland by the Nen and Ouse. But, as far as the general practice of skating was concerned, it is pretty certain that it was introduced by the courtiers of the Merry Monarch who had learnt the art in their exile. And for this, Samuel Pepys is in evidence, who writes in December, 1662: "Over the Parke, where I first in my life, it being a great frost, did see people sliding with their skatees, which is a very pretty art."

Evelyn, too, notes at the same date, "strange and wonderful dexterity of the sliders on the new canal in St. James's Park, performed before their majesties by divers gentlemen and others, with skatees, after the manner of the Hollanders."

The Duke of York, afterwards King James the Second, was, it seems, a skilful performer on the ice, and Pepys notes at the same period: "To the Duke, and followed him to the Park, where, although the ice was broken and dangerous, yet he would go slide upon his skatees, which I did not like; but he slides very well."

Now Pepys, it may be remembered, was from Huntingdon, and should have been well acquainted with the Fens, and, if skating had been practised there in his time, it seems strange that he should mention it as a novelty.

Half a century after this the use of skatees could hardly have been universal, as Swift writes to Stella in 1711: "The canal and Rosamond's Pond full of the rabble, and with skatees, if you know what that is."

The rabble, as the aristocratic Dean called them, have always been at home in St. James's Park, and, when the Serpentine and the Round Pond were formed by Queen Caroline in 1730, the more aristocratic skaters migrated to the more exclusive waters, Kensington Gardens not being then open to the general public. Even now, the gathering upon the ice in St. James's Park is of a ruder and rougher character than elsewhere.

And now, with the facilities afforded by rail and telegraph, the best skaters and the most enthusiastic generally go further afield than the Parks. The chief skate shops are posted during a frost with telegrams from all parts as to the state of the ice. One may run down to Ely and take a turn with the fennmen; or, nearer at hand, there are Virginia Water, the Hendon Lake, Frensham Ponds, and dozens of others.

Still, it is pleasant for a mere casual skater to find himself or herself, without going far from home, among the pushing, cheerful crowd on the Serpentine or the Round Pond. How quickly the exhilarating feeling takes hold of people! We only came for an hour, and we stop two; we will snatch a hasty meal and be on the ice again. The moon is at its full; what about a torchlight procession and hockey on the ice? Visions of all kinds of fun seem to present themselves to the imagination; and then comes a drop of rain, and then a drizzle, and then a thorough down-pour, and we struggle through the slush, and mud, and general "débâcle" to hail a passing omnibus.

KNIGHTS OF THE WHEEL.

"By discovering a new dish," says the epigrammatic author of "Physiologie du Gout," "a man confers more benefit upon the human race than by discovering a new star." In my opinion, the man who invents a new pleasure, which can be shared by rich and poor alike, confers still greater benefit. And, as a recreation, there is, to my mind, nothing equal to tricycling, the only drawback being that it cannot be indulged in at all seasons of the year, and in all kinds of weather.

My own experiences of tricycling are of the most pleasant character, because I ride for the sake of health and recreation. I used to think Dr. Richardson a fanatic because he spoke so enthusiastically of its charms and benefits; but I now know that he underrated rather than overrated them. Indeed, it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the intense pleasure derived from tricycling. Charles Lamb wished that he might have a pension, and walk out in the "fine Izaak Walton mornings, careless as a beggar, and walking, walking, and dying walking." His sensations of boundless delight when relieved from "this thorn of a desk," and

presented with his freedom, are only equalled by those experienced by the tricyclist.

My first experience of tricycling was, however, not very agreeable; for tricycles are like horses. Some run easily and give no trouble, while others take all the strength out of a man, and require great care in driving. I did not keep my resolve never to mount another tricycle. I selected a machine which proved easier than the first and more amenable to control; but it was some time before I discovered the existence of a tricycle which exactly suited me. This was a machine of the Gripper pattern, with a direct steerer. I found it easier to drive, and more comfortable. By means of a fork in the front wheel, vibration in this machine is reduced to a minimum.

Tricycling has given me, not only intense pleasure, but good digestion. Indigestion is a serious drawback to the comfort of literary men; in fact, it is to all men whose occupation is sedentary, whether clerks, or tailors, or watchmakers, or shoemakers, or authors.

I venture to think that if Carlyle, for instance, had used a tricycle, the morbid condition of his mind would have disappeared, and the enemy which soured his temper and embittered his life, would have vanished as by a spell. As William Howitt said: "There is nothing like a throwing off the harness and giving mind and body a holiday;" and the best way of doing this is by means of a tricycle. I tried all kinds of "remedies" for indigestion without success; but tricycling proved an unfailing cure; and I believe, with Dr. Gordon Stables, that, of all kinds of exercise, the best is cycling, when adopted with wisdom.

As a rule I have travelled alone, because I have never been able to keep on good terms with a companion. Like Charles Lamb's dog, he would persist in going where I did not want to go, and in refusing to look at things which took my fancy. When I called, he answered not; therefore we parted. Whether at home or abroad, I prefer wandering at my own sweet will, going down this road, and walking up that hill, plucking a wild flower here, and chatting with a labourer there.

But I do not underrate the advantages of travelling in company. In London it is absolutely necessary for the sake of protection from the gangs of roughs who infest every suburb; and, as accidents to tri-

cyclists usually arise from the stupidity of the drivers of horses, it is desirable to have a witness in view of legal proceedings. Prejudices against wheelmen still exist, proofs of which may be found every week in the pages of the cycling press. Hence the wisdom of a connection with the National Cyclists' Union, which endeavours to remove these prejudices. It is a vigilance association for the protection of its members. It defends them from assault and injury; it examines the bye-laws of Local Boards, and watches private Bills in Parliament affecting cyclists. It erects danger-boards on highways; it has just issued papers on the legal aspects of road repair, with special relation to the rights of cyclists to enforce the maintenance of roads. In a word, the National Cyclists' Union is the legislative body of wheelmen throughout the United Kingdom. The President of the Union is the Right Honourable Viscount Bury, who, like Lord Sherbrooke, rides a bicycle; and its members include the Honourable Keith Falconer, Professor of Arabic at Cambridge University; Mr. Oscar Browning, of King's College, Cambridge; and Mr. William Black, the novelist.

It is estimated that there are one hundred and seventy-five thousand cyclists in the United Kingdom; an estimate very much under the mark, in my opinion. Some idea of the demand for cycles may be gathered from the fact that one firm of makers alone employs over five hundred men. Coventry, it is well known, has derived a new lease of commercial life from the manufacture of tricycles and bicycles.

Much might be said of tricycling as an aid to touring. The road is certainly preferable to the rail; for in railway travelling one has no time to make observations, and to appreciate fully the beauty of the scenery through which the train rushes. One cannot tip the driver to pull up whilst an old church is examined, a ruined abbey visited, or a pretty 'bit of scenery sketched. Now, tricycling enables one to become acquainted with rural England, and the highways are literally alive with the "knights of the wheel" throughout the summer and autumn months. Here comes a party of "cads on castors;" there goes a happy couple spending their honeymoon on a tandem; yonder a party of grey-haired pilgrims to some distant shrine; and swiftly by them runs a gang of young fellows, who are straining every nerve on a record-hunting journey.

The public-houses, as well as the highways, are a scene of bustle and animation which has had no parallel since the old coaching days. For the publican the "good old times" have indeed returned; and he seems determined to make the most of them. He certainly deserves to be well paid by the racing men for whom he has to cater at all hours of the night; but it is unfair to treat all cyclists alike. It must not be forgotten, however, that tricycling creates an enormous appetite, which must throw consternation in the minds of some landladies.

One advantage of using the Cyclists' Touring Club hotels, where a reduced tariff is supposed to be in force, is, that in many cases the hotel-keeper is himself a tricyclist, and a fellow feeling makes him wondrous kind. Sometimes he is able to repair broken machines, and is always in a position to stable the machines of his customers. This is a decided advantage; for it is no easy matter to find good accommodation for man and machine.

But although cycling is an aid to touring, the tricycle serves a much more useful purpose as a means of recreation. Daily exercise of some sort is indispensable to all men, especially to brain-workers; and, in my case, tricycling is better than walking. I like the country in summer time, but, if I were to walk out of the city in which I live, it would take me above an hour to get clear of the Babel of bricks; whereas, on my tricycle, I can reach the green fields easily in a few minutes. In all respects, tricycling is a much better form of recreation than walking. It is a delightful as well as a beneficial exercise. The pleasure of motion on a tricycle must be felt; it cannot be put into words.

I should like to see an extension of tricycling, among women especially; because it is not only a most delightful but most beneficial exercise. The "demon of want of beneficial exercise and its results must be combated," said Dr. Cantlie in his lecture on "Degeneration amongst Londoners," and he referred with approval to three sports which "have taken a hold on the community." First among them came cycling, concerning which he remarks: "By the bicycle and tricycle men and women can be carried rapidly out of town to country lanes and open air. The exercise is pleasant, in that the motion is rapid, and that one is sent along by one's own exertion. Nothing in the way of exercise could be more calculated to do

good to dwellers in towns, and it seems a merciful interposition that such an excellent means has been supplied. It allows of really beneficial exercise when it carries its rider out of an ozoneless region."

Tricycling is, moreover, a safe pastime. Accidents seldom occur to persons who go at a steady pace and who keep their machine under control. A rider's safety depends largely upon the brake, which should be carefully examined before starting on a journey.

In brief, then, tricycling has furnished me with an enjoyable form of recreation; it has cured me of dyspepsia; it has enabled me to sleep better; it has given me a knowledge of mechanics; and it has made me better acquainted with the green lanes and the rustic charms of Old England. And, if you choose, it will do all these things for you.

MY POOR LITTLE STORY.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

"WELCOME home, dear Lucy!"

"Yes, I have come back; I could not go on any longer without seeing you all."

Mother was kissing me effusively, and the young ones had clustered round to welcome me. They had all warm hearts, if they had nothing else, at Mudford.

Father and Marion had met me at the station and had walked home with me, while a porter took charge of my luggage.

"You left Aunt Hilda well?" mother asked anxiously, as she led me from the hall into the shabby parlour, which seemed ten times shabbier than ever.

"Yes, quite well; she sent you her love, and I have a present from her for you, and another for Marion, and Marion and I are to go back to her together; and I was to tell you that she will write a long letter soon and tell you everything."

"And you liked living with her?" Chrissie asked curiously.

Chrissie came next in years to Jack, who followed me, and was just at the age to wonder over her own chances of promotion to Aunt Hilda's favour.

"Yes, she was very kind. Aunt Hilda is kind, though she does not always seem so at the first."

"I always said you and she would suit each other, did I not?" Marion asked, smiling.

"Yes, and you were right, though she

never ceases to deplore that I am not a Hurst."

"What does that matter, when you are going to become a Leslie?" Chrissie asked flippantly; and at this not very obvious joke all the young ones laughed.

I blushed a little, and then Marion and I went upstairs together that I might perform a toilet and enjoy a chat.

Like everything else about home Marion seemed to have changed and deteriorated, though I had tact enough not to tell her so. I do not mean to say that she was not still most beautiful, but there was a vague, inexplicable shadow on her loveliness.

"Not happy," I said to myself; "and no wonder."

In my own joy and triumph I could afford to pity even her.

I could not have told why I was so sorry for them all—for father, who was thinner and greyer than ever; for mother, whose dark eyes had deeper shadows beneath them; for the boys and girls, who seemed all legs and elbows through their patched and shabby clothing.

"Do you know what I think the greatest grief in life?" I asked suddenly, looking up from a kneeling position on the floor, where I was busily tugging at the straps of my biggest trunk.

"No; what is it?"

"Poverty. Not the poverty that starves in a garret—that must end one way or another soon—but the poverty mis-named genteel, which has aspirations and knowledge, but no hope and no chance of attainment to anything beyond a meagre crust of daily bread."

"Yes, poverty is tyrannous and ugly," Marion answered dreamily; "but oh, how beautiful it makes people, Lucy, when they bear it patiently! To live with father and mother, and to watch them amid all their struggles, is an education."

"Yes; but I think there are pleasanter things than illustrating in one's own person the blessedness of suffering," I said grimly. "For their sakes I am tired of it, Marion, and one of the sweetest thoughts I have is that I shall be able to help them in the future."

"I don't think father will care to accept alms of Sir Gilbert Leslie," Marion said, languidly lifting her proud head.

"Alms! how can you put it so? Whoever thought of alms? But there are a hundred things a rich man can do for his— for those he wishes to serve."

"And there are things a poor man can—

not accept, even from a son-in-law. Sir Gilbert can get father a living if he tries; that is the only thing he would accept, or that I should let him accept."

"What in the world have you to do with it?" I asked pettishly, for the diamond circlet on my finger made me brave to confront even Marion.

"I am father's daughter, the one who is likely to be with him longest of all his children, and I have a right to say where in we shall decline the favours even of Sir Gilbert and Lady Leslie. Certainly we are poor, but we are not paupers."

"How unkind you are!" I cried, bursting into tears. "If I had known that you would have had only reproaches to greet me with, I don't think I should have cared to come home."

"Forgive me, Lucy." She came over and knelt down beside me, and put her arm about me. "Believe me, I am very glad you are happy, very glad you will have love and all else that you value in the future."

"I should like you to be pleased—I should like you to like Gilbert."

"You are very fond of him?"

"How could I be anything else—so handsome, and clever, and splendid as he is?"

"And so rich too."

I looked up at her sharply. "Yes, he is rich, but I did not think of that; if I had only thought of money I might have done even better than Gilbert."

"Then you were quite a success?"

"I did not say so; but one may be liked without being the distinguished beauty you are."

Marion rose from her knees and smoothed her dress carefully with her hand. "I did not mean to offend you," she said slowly. "I don't think your visit to Aunt Hilda has improved you." And then she went downstairs, and left me to cry my eyes out over the presents I had packed with such pleasure for everyone. I had anticipated a certain amount of pain in my home-coming, but certainly I had not expected to be rebuked and disregarded.

I recalled carefully every word that had passed between Marion and me, and grew only more indignant under a sense of wrong. I had said nothing to offend her, and she certainly had been unkind.

"Perhaps she is angry that I am getting married before her?" I said, but dismissed the thought as contemptible. What could she care for that, when she had refused to marry Lord Stelfox?

Mother came up a little later to sit with me. Dear, sweet mother! she was ready enough to hear all I had to tell, and to rejoice with me.

"You are very fond of Sir Gilbert?" she said, stroking my hair tenderly.

"Oh, yes! How could I help it? When you have seen him you will wonder, as I do, how he could ever have thought of a little stupid thing like me."

"I don't know that men generally like women better for being very large or very clever," mother answered with her bright smile.

"He is as handsome as he can be," I went on; "and he is such a natural man. I never was shy with him as I am with most people; and we were friends from the very first; and I never was ashamed to let him know that we were poor at home, and I do not in the least mind his coming here and seeing all our makeshift ways. Perhaps that is because he was not always rich himself. In his youth he had struggles like other people, and came into the baronetcy quite unexpectedly last year."

"Yes; his cousin was drowned, I remember."

"Marion knew him a little long ago, but I suppose she has forgotten him, for he was of no account then; but he remembers her perfectly, and he told me some particulars of her engagement to Lord Stelfox; and we have arranged that when we are married we shall try to bring them together again."

"It is not often that men are matchmakers," mother said, flushing prettily over the grand future which seemed opening out before her daughters.

"Oh! I think I am the matchmaker, but he approved of all I proposed; for, of course, he sees how desirable it is that all should come right between them."

"What is Lord Stelfox like?"

"He is nice; not as handsome as Gilbert, but nice nevertheless. Not very young, you know, but handsome. Aunt Hilda is very fond of him."

"I wonder what came between him and Marion?"

"I don't know; and neither does Aunt Hilda."

Mother and I went downstairs amicably, arm in arm, and though Marion did not make any reference to our conversation, her manner was apologetic. But she manifested no interest in Gilbert, nor even asked how anything had come about.

We were all very busy in the days before Gilbert came, cooking and scrubbing,

patching and darning, so as to wear our best aspect before him.

"Thank goodness my share in the general neediness is nearly over!" I said as I put little final touches to the flowers I was arranging in the spare bedroom, while Marion was tacking on fresh window-blinds.

"You have a great horror of poverty," she said, with that cold intonation that I was learning to know and detest.

"I hate it more than anything in the wide world."

"Then how fortunate that you will be so far beyond its reach in the future!"

"Yes, I am glad Gilbert is rich."

"Is he very rich?"

"Eighteen thousand a year."

"You ought to live very comfortably on that."

"Of course it is a small thing compared with Lord Stelfox's income," I said, rather nettled by her coolness.

"Indeed! Is Lord Stelfox so rich?"

"Thirty thousand a year. Just as if you did not know, and you engaged to him!"

"I never was engaged to him."

"What a story! Aunt Hilda says you were, and so does Gilbert."

"They are mistaken." But if they were, what made her so white when she spoke about it?

It was a sweet September evening when Gilbert came to us. There was a full moon in the sky—not a breath of air was stirring, and everything was silent save the distant barking of a farmer's dog, or the landrail's shrill note that reverberated through all the circle of the valley.

I had gone out to the gate to meet him half-an-hour before he could possibly come, for the world was so sweet that I wished to fancy myself alone in it waiting for him.

The privet hedge that enclosed the garden cast a shadow black as ebony on the gravelled walk, and the late roses looked chill and pale with the dew on their faces. I was so happy that I felt half afraid, and shivered a little as I heard the sound of approaching wheels.

He was driving, of course, but he alighted when he saw me, and we walked hand in hand up the short drive to the door.

Father came out into the hall to meet him, and as the two men shook hands, I was proud of them both. The poor little elderly Curate looked every inch as much

a gentleman as the handsome soldierly Baronet.

Mother was in the drawing-room in her black silk dress and lace cap, resting for once. Gilbert looked down on her with a face full of emotion when I introduced him, and only that it would have been un-English, I am sure that he would have kissed the hand she offered him. No doubt they were all stirred to a good deal at this first meeting, but they fell to talking commonplaces, as people do, about his journey, and the weather; and then I slipped out of the room to look for Marion.

She was standing by the bed-room window looking out at the flood of moonlight that seemed to bathe the landscape in its serene tide. She wore a white dress, and in the faint light she looked very pale.

"Gilbert is here," I said.

"Yes, I saw you come up the drive with him."

"Then won't you come down to see him?"

"Certainly, I am quite ready."

"How grand you are!"

"In an old white muslin frock?"

"It isn't an old frock, it is your very newest."

"So it is, and one of the few dresses I never wore in London."

The light in the drawing-room was very faint when we entered it; but Gilbert saw us, and rose to greet us. Though I knew it was needless, I introduced them; and Marion bowed in silence, which made everyone feel constrained, and we were all uncomfortable till dinner was announced.

That put us more at our ease, and when once Marion had begun to talk, she was perfectly brilliant. I had never heard her so witty or so amusing.

I could not help wondering if Gilbert found her much changed, for I noticed him looking at her curiously many times.

Of course I saw nothing of Gilbert alone that night; but next morning I was in the garden betimes. Possibly the knowledge that he was there before me had hastened my movements a little.

"I hope you like my people," I said, slipping my hand through his arm, and trying to accommodate my pace to his.

"Very much indeed."

"Are they what you expected?"

"I expected less than the reality."

"Do you find Marion much changed?"

"Yes."

"But she is beautiful still."

"More beautiful than ever, I think."

"I wish I looked like her. I should do more credit to your taste then."

"Beauty is not everything."

"So people say; but no one ever said that it was not a very great deal."

We went into breakfast after a time, and that morning it was Marion's whim not to notice Gilbert; but he did not seem to mind much. He directed all his conversation to mother, and mother seemed to like him.

Father had several letters that morning, and mother had one from Aunt Hilda; but Gilbert had none, nor was there any recognisable reason why he should say, as soon as we were alone: "I think I shall go back to town to-day, Lucy."

"To-day?" I echoed blankly.

"Yes. I shall speak to your father as soon as I can make an opportunity, and then there will be nothing to detain me further."

"Then you wish to leave?"

"I don't wish it, Lucy; but I think I ought to leave."

"Well, just as you like."

He had been standing by the hearth; but now he came over beside me and put his arm round me.

"Instead of staying here with you, I want you to come and stay with me as soon as ever you can. Lucy, when will you be my wife?"

"Oh, I don't know; I have not thought of that!"

"Then think of it now—this is September. Shall we say the first week in October?"

"Three weeks off."

"Yes, why not? You don't want any paraphernalia or display."

"Oh no! I should like to be married quite quietly, though Aunt Hilda has determined on a great ceremony."

"Do you know what I have been wondering since I came here, Lucy?"

"No; what is it?"

"It was about your Aunt Hilda. But it is of no consequence."

"Oh yes, it is! You must tell me."

"Well, I was wondering whether she is a malignant witch or a good woman."

"Oh, you rude man! How can you say such a horrid thing?"

"I did not say it; I only thought it."

"Well, you may make up your mind that she is a very good woman, since she introduced me to you."

"Poor little Lucy! How grateful you are for small mercies! But you have not

answered my question. Will you marry me in a month?"

"I suppose it will be very undignified to consent, but, if it will make you happy—yes."

We talked of many things after this, in a practical and sensible way, as though we were already old married people; and when we heard father's voice in the hall, Gilbert went out to speak with him, and I ran upstairs to tell the latest turn of affairs to Marion.

She was in the room we called the work-room, and she was hard at work on an old sheet, turning the stout part to the centre.

I sat down opposite her idly, my face between my hands, and my elbows on the table.

I wanted her to say something that would encourage me to tell my tale; but she did not utter a single word nor lift her eyes from her sewing.

"Why don't you talk to me?" I asked pettishly; "you won't have me to talk to long. Gilbert and I are to be married in October."

"I hope you will be very happy."

"I think we are sure to be. Don't you like him?"

"He seems a very charming man."

There was nothing more to be got out of her, so I went downstairs, and she remained in the work-room all day. But whatever she was doing she was not sewing, for I found her needle sticking in the very same spot of iron-mould that I had noticed when I was talking to her.

Gilbert remained till the end of the week, as he had promised; but somehow the days were not so full of happiness as I had anticipated. Perhaps I saw less of him than I had hoped, for he had become very friendly with the boys, and took long walks with them daily. I don't know that I should have noticed this but for Chrissie, who was always saying that she hoped when she got a lover he would not show an obvious preference for any company rather than hers; but Chrissie always noticed what nobody else saw, and had a most unpleasant way of speaking her mind.

I think it was as much to show my contempt for Chrissie's insinuations as from any other motive, that I pretended a lot of private business about this time. Of course, there was always sewing to do, and Aunt Hilda insisted on a letter from me every week; and, therefore, I made these things into imperative claims, and would take my

needlework and writing materials down to the old summer-house, and sit there by myself, often half the afternoon. Perhaps I hoped that Gilbert would enquire after me and join me; and so he did sometimes, and then we talked together, though I don't think it was lovers' talk. Yet I don't know why I should say that, for what can lovers find more delightful to discuss than where they will go for their honeymoon, and how they will spend their time after they are married?

I don't know that I was discontented, and yet I don't think that I was perfectly happy, as I sat stitching away preoccupiedly beneath the shelter of the overgrown shrubs that half hid the entrance to the summer-house.

The little stream that purred past under cover of the long grass, was singing away most merrily, and a pair of chaffinches were musically discussing some ripe berries in the hedge. In the distance, Marion and Gilbert were sauntering in the sunlight, and, as my glance fell on them, I asked myself if there were many men and women in the world half as goodly to look on.

They seemed, to have unbent towards each other in the last day or two, and I was glad of that, and gave them every opportunity of becoming friends.

They had been walking on the terrace beneath the windows, and some of these were open, and the soft breeze stirred the muslin curtains a little as they passed.

I thought they were coming to look for me; but no doubt they were only suspicious of eavesdroppers, and turned half-unconsciously and crossed the lawn, for they were walking slowly, and before they reached me they turned again and went in the opposite direction. But our garden was not very spacious, and, after a time, they came towards me, and snatches of their talk reached me.

"It will do no harm to make me understand now, and I should like to know what you meant," Gilbert was saying.

I could not hear her answer, and, when they turned and came back again, this time a little nearer, it was he who was speaking.

"How was it possible to imagine that you cared then, or would have remembered still? Oh Marion, Marion! what can I do or say?"

"You can neither do nor say anything, and I think it is rather insolent of you, Sir Gilbert, to assume that anything you could possibly say would be of the slightest consequence to me."

His answer was lost this time; but after a little I caught her words again.

"I do not think you have anyone to blame but yourself, if that affords you any consolation. As to blaming Aunt Hilda, I don't see the good of that. She wanted me to marry Lord Stelfox, and she did not want me to marry you, and, from her point of view, that was quite right."

"But she told me you were engaged to him; and I was not satisfied with that. I asked you if it was true, and you said yes."

"Which was a very poor joke to make with a person as literal as yourself. But you see I hardly took you seriously, seeing that it was but a few little hours since I had promised to be true to you for a lifetime if necessary."

"But the promise was such a desperately foolish one for you, that I was only too ready to doubt that you meant it," he said with a groan.

"But you see I did mean it. However, that is not of any consequence now. If you make Lucy happy I shall be quite satisfied that things are as they are."

Once again they passed out of hearing, and again came back, and Marion was speaking coldly and firmly:

"I forbid you ever to refer to this matter again. You are my sister's lover now, and, except in that capacity, not of the slightest interest to me."

"I shall remember," he answered gravely.

I don't know how long I sat there gazing straight before me blankly; perhaps an hour, perhaps only a few minutes.

Now that I realised the truth, that Marion and Gilbert had been lovers once, were, lovers still in all but name, I seemed to have known it always, and, in a helpless way, to have been waiting for the blow which had just fallen. But that rendered it none the less cruel. Why should I be always the defeated one? Why should Marion's lovers always trample over my heart to reach her? Had I been more of a heroine I would not have remembered at that moment that this was not the first occasion on which Marion had wounded me cruelly; but I was not a heroine, and in a paroxysm of wrath, and rage, and misery, I thought both of Gilbert and Mr. Drew. What had I done to her? Why must she always embitter life for me?

And then to talk as she has done, so cruelly and boldly, within my hearing, not thinking of me and not caring! Oh, life was unjust, and men and women were

cruel! What had I done to deserve such pain and shame—I, of all people in the world?

I fell prostrate on the ground, and hid my face from the daylight, and found no words for my despair.

"Lucy, what in the world are you doing? We have been looking for you everywhere."

It was Marion who spoke, and I lifted my white face, and looked at her with my miserable swollen eyes.

"What is the matter?" she asked in an awed voice, though I knew in a moment that she understood.

I rose and pushed my hair back from my aching temples, and then I went towards the door where she was standing, and said huskily, "Come."

Without a word she turned and followed me across the turf.

Gilbert was standing by the hearth when we entered the drawing-room, and hearing us he turned.

"Take her," I said, pointing to my sister, and each word came broken by a sob, "she was yours before I was;" and then I turned my face away, and burst into heart-broken weeping.

It was very undignified, and the last thing in the world that I should have wished to do; but for all that I think I bore myself as bravely as they did.

Marion's eyes were downcast, and she could not utter a word, while, if ever a man looked overwhelmed, Gilbert did then.

"Can you forgive me?" he asked at last.

"Oh yes, of course I forgive you; but what was the good of making me your scapegoat? Could you not have loved Marion and left me alone? What had I ever done to you?"

"I meant to make you happy if I could; believe that at any rate," he said in an odd, husked voice.

"Happy, with your heart in my sister's keeping, and you always acting a part! Well, I am very inferior, certainly; but yet I think I have a right to something more than that."

"He thought he loved you—indeed, he did love you," Marion said pleadingly.

But I turned on her furiously. "Don't dare to take his part—don't dare to speak to me," I cried, and then I fled from their sight.

Gilbert got away as soon as he could, and I don't think a single word

more passed between him and Marion. Three days later a letter came for father, in which Gilbert tried his best to explain matters. It was a letter that must have cost him tortures to write, and I was acutely sorry for him as I read it. Of course he professed unbounded veneration for me; but he made no secret of the fact that he loved Marion, and he contritely asked father's pardon for all the trouble he had caused in his family.

Father's hand shook a little as he read the letter. These last days had told on him like so many years.

"May I see what Sir Gilbert says?" I asked, extending my hand for the letter.

"He says nothing. What can he say?" but he gave me the letter, nevertheless. Then he rose and left the room; and Marion followed him. He went into the library and sat down dejectedly in his worn arm-chair, and Marion fell at his feet. "Don't be hard on me," she said through her sobs, "I feel like Cain already; don't make me feel like Cain and Abel too."

"This is a dreadful thing," father said tremulously.

"Yes, do you think I do not realise better than anyone how dreadful it is?"

"I suppose you will marry Sir Gilbert?" after a dreary pause.

"I suppose I shall—ultimately; but oh, father! all the joy is quite out of it now. If Lucy had only cared for him, it would have been bad enough; but to think that he actually asked her to marry him, that they have been engaged for weeks, and that—oh, how could I be so base as to take him from her?"

"Why did he ask her? I can't understand that," father said fretfully.

"It was all Aunt Hilda's doing. She was always angry with Gilbert and me. Angry with him because she fancied he stood between her and her pet plan of getting me well married; angry with me because I would not go back with her when she wanted me. She had cut Gilbert long ago; but when he came into his title she took him up again. I don't know what she meant by it—perhaps nothing at the first—but Lucy was there, and aunt is an inveterate matchmaker, and I suppose she saw her way to punish me for not being there also."

"But Sir Gilbert should not have been a mere tool in the hands of your Aunt Hilda," father answered severely.

"No, he should not; but if we never

made mistakes there would be less pain in the world. And you must not be too hard on him; he really was fond of Lucy and meant to make her happy, and only for the unfortunate mistake of his coming here all would have been well. But the chief fault is mine, I should have gone away when I knew he was coming—only that I had no place to go to."

I suppose things did not look quite so black when father and Marion had talked them over, nor every one so culpable, for father wrote to Gilbert that evening, and his letter was friendly, if a little stiff and cold. It was unfortunate that Sir Gilbert had mistaken his feelings for me, he said, but since I was willing to accept the fact of the mistake and forgive it, he thought we might all be very good friends in the future.

In another week a cautious letter came for Marion. Would she try and think kindly of the writer, and, when she thought he had been punished enough for all the mistakes he had made, would she write and say she forgave him? Till then he would manifest his sense of guilt by his patience.

Marion took several days to ponder her reply, but, when she did write, her letter was frank and kind. She was very sorry for him, very sorry for me, and a little sorry for herself; but she did not think anything that had gone wrong could be rectified by childishness and pretence. She loved him as much as she had ever done, and when time had taken the edge off every one's pain she would be his wife; but, till then, she thought it was better that he and she should seem to forget each other.

Gilbert accepted her opinion and went abroad, and it was not till a year after that he and she were married quietly in the parish church at Mudford, father officiating, and Chrissie acting as solitary bridesmaid. I was present, with mother, sitting in one of the pews near the altar, and I thought it a sad little ceremony, as sad as many a funeral.

Aunt Hilda came to see us after the wedding, and said many severe things of both bride and bridegroom, and sneered at me because I had been poor-spirited enough to let Gilbert go when I had won him; but when she asked me to go back with her again and see if there were not better men than Gilbert Leslie to be had for the seeking, I showed her that I was not so meek as she had thought.

"I never was happy in your house, and I never wish to see it again," I said. "And as to your kindness in taking up mother's children one after the other, to make them eat humble pie and obey you, I don't think it any kindness, but just a solace to your conscience."

"And why should my conscience suffer?" Aunt Hilda asked with her slight, cold smile.

"Oh, people like to feel themselves beneficent, and it is easier to patronise mother that way, than to halve your fortune with her, as you ought."

Aunt Hilda shrugged her shoulders, said it was wasted kindness to try to serve me, and ignored me during the remainder of her visit. And after she had left, mother scolded me for trying to alienate the only one of her family who had been kind to her.

Mother was dreadfully afraid that Aunt Hilda was offended past recall, so that when she wrote at the beginning of the following season, and offered to take Chrissie up to town and bring her out, mother was overwhelmed with gratitude. It is wonderful to me how these obstinate, independent people manage to coerce the judgement of others.

Chrissie went, of course; and now the society papers have it that "Lord Stelfox will shortly lead to the altar the beautiful granddaughter of the late Lord Hurst." We have not, however, had any private confirmation of this bit of gossip, and have not, therefore, accepted it yet.

Shortly after Marion's marriage, father was offered the beautiful living of Maplewood, which, of course, he accepted thankfully; and, after we had been installed there some time, Marion came to pay us a visit.

She is happy now, there is no doubt of that; and if she talked little of Gilbert and their life together, that was only to spare my feelings, I knew.

It was during her stay that Mr. Drew paid us his third visit, and he was so brotherly with her, that I think she suspected something, and after he had gone she took me aside and said: "I want you to tell me, Lucy, that you are going to make that good man happy."

And I said: "It is dreadfully commonplace of me, I know, and if I were a heroine such a thing would be impossible; but, not being a heroine, I suppose I may as well admit that, in the spring, I am going to marry Mr. Drew."

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER LVI.

TOWARDS morning the wind lulled, dying hard in a succession of long, low howlings. There was no glow of dawn in the sky, none of that glad flush of colour spread across the heavens, which seems like Creation's hymn of thankfulness to its Maker for night ended, day begun. Only the fog whitened a little, then thinned, and hung about the low ground in tattered folds.

Frank scanned the horizon with his old telescope. The hull of a wrecked vessel would have seemed all in keeping with that lashing brown sea, and dismal, iron-grey sky. But no vessel, wrecked or otherwise, broke the dreary monotony of the sea-scape.

They got their boat out, intending to pull round the coast and out into the open sea, in case there might be wreckage of some sort to tell the tale of the lost ship.

Young Christian's son, a boy of twelve or thirteen, made his way at daybreak to the lighthouse, bringing dismal accounts of the destruction the gale had wrought inland. The palings round the rye-fields had been carried away, the sheep-folds had been utterly destroyed, and some of the sheep blown into a gully. It would take a week to repair the damage.

Frank wondered what would repair the damage wrought outside on the wild Atlantic, and whether it might so happen that he held a personal interest in the answer to the question.

For reason with himself as he might, he could not divest himself of the notion that the winds of last night had held his fate in their hands; that somewhere beneath the murky, troubled waves, was perhaps hidden away a message for him which only the Day of Judgement would reveal.

They enlisted the boy's services to steer for them. The two men pulled across the Sound out into the open sea. It was rough work; they had to row their hardest, for the waves, although they lacked the terrific force and volume of overnight, were still turbulent. Nothing but a drear expanse of sea and sky met their gaze, turn it which way they would. They had left the remnants of the fog behind them in the Sound; the sky showed patches of bright blue here and there between the hillocks of fleeting

clouds. Not a boat was anywhere in sight, not a vestige of wreckage to be seen—not so much as the splinter of a mast or broken floating hen-coop.

They rowed backwards and forwards aimlessly for an hour or so, young Christian repeating meanwhile that brief chapter from his experience, of how that within a mile of where they rowed now a big Russian barque had gone down with all hands, and not so much as a floating spar had been left to tell the tale.

But Frank scarcely heard him for the tumult his own thoughts kept up within, a tumult which one simple question had started and kept going: "Now, supposing that Ned, on his way here, was drowned in the storm of last night, am I to wait on, trusting he has kept his promise to provide for that emergency? Or may I consider that I have fulfilled every claim that honour or gratitude can have upon me, and return to my friends?"

It was a complex question. He had at one time been quick in answering questions in a word, at cutting all sorts of knots with a single touch. But here was a knot that defied alike fingers or knife. Second thoughts suggested that, perhaps after all, it was a question he had no right to ask, and when he fell to considering upon what grounds he had started it, he found they were unsubstantial enough. His mind was restless and ill at ease; he had heard a signal-gun fired in the height of the storm; and on this slight foundation he had built a fabric sky-high. Ned was, of necessity, in that particular boat; Ned, of necessity, had been drowned, with every living soul on board. There was, evidently, nothing in reason to warrant such a conclusion.

With something of a groan he helped to run the boat in and pull it up on the beach. Then he offered to assist young Christian with his shattered palings and sheep-folds. Hard, incessant work, for that day at least, he felt he must have. To sit still with folded hands meant mental torture of the worst kind. Perhaps, while his hands were busy, his brain might clear.

With brief intervals for food, the two men worked hard till close upon sundown. Then another mood fell upon Frank; he grew restless, distracted again, threw his carpentering tools down in a heap, strapped his seal-cap under his chin, and went wading through the receding waters down to the beach once more.

Why he went he could not have said, he felt too perturbed in mind to reason on this or any matter. His brain felt all on fire, his nerves unstrung. The anxiety and suspense of the past nine months were beginning to tell upon him physically as well as mentally, the grip of the terrors of over-night was on him still.

The wind had ceased entirely now; the sea, with many a sullen roar, was settling down to its usual wash and ceaseless lapping at the base of the mighty headland on which the Light Tower was built. The fog was nothing more than a thin veil of silver mist, hanging here and there on the horizon in all sorts of fantastic clouds, which caught the wonderful Iris hues thrown upwards by the sinking sun. One cloud in shape was like a huge promontory, jutting out into a waveless sea of blue; another showed like a gigantic dolphin with fins of fire, and, like a dying dolphin, was flushing into marvellous, changeable tints, as minute by minute the sun sank lower. Sea-gulls flapped in front of it, catching momentary rainbow colours on their grey wings. The white-crested waves far out at sea caught here a golden tinge, there a dash of violet or crimson, at the will of the mist or of the dying sun.

Frank saw it all without seeing it. Great Nature will charm a man into speech, or awe him into silence, only in so far as the man's brain is calm enough to play the part of mirror to her brilliant lights or gloomy shades. Let that man's brain be turbulent with fear, remorse, passion, regret, and Nature will spread her glories before him in vain. She may pipe to him, he will not dance; mourn to him, and he will not lament.

Thus it was with Frank now. He was blind to the beauties around him; he saw nothing but the miserable tragedy of his own life being played out conjointly with that of another young life infinitely dearer to him than his own; saw himself here a prisoner chained to a rock, by chains none the less cruel that they were invisible; saw Joyce miles and miles away, stretching out empty arms towards him, with longing eyes and aching heart. He looked away from the brilliant sky picture overhead, and saw nought but the cruel, crawling merciless sea at his feet.

We talk about the grandeur of the sea, or its fury, or its cruelty, but you must put on one shore all that is most precious in life—love, happiness, home—and yourself, a lonely exile on another; then let the great

sea roll in between the two shores, to know what a jailor it can be.

And as Frank stood thus, a forlorn, despairing man, a sudden thought of Mab came to him. Whence it came, what brought it, he did not know. During all these months of exile his thoughts had rung the changes on but one keynote—Joyce. Hers was too engrossing a personality to leave much room for another's beside it; and, to say truth, though Mab might have flitted at times like a shadow through his dreams, she seldom or never filled his waking thoughts. Yet here, in the midst of this silence and solitude, came a thought as entirely distinct from its surroundings as would have been the sudden carol of a nightingale on that sea-shore, or the coo of a wood-pigeon.

One turns over the letters of a dear, dead friend, and tries to conjure out of the mists of bygone years the face we have known and loved; but we find that the sweet and once familiar features are not to be summoned at will. We tie up the packet of letters with their faded ribbon, put them by in the drawer amid sprigs of rosemary and dead roses, go out into the busy world, buy and sell in the market, or dance at our balls, when lo, of a sudden, the tender eyes look out at us among a hundred other faces, the sweet mouth smiles once more its greeting or adieu!

So it was with Frank now. Without effort of will, Mab's personality at that moment filled his thoughts; without strain to his memory he could see her face as he had known and loved it in the years gone by. Not as he had known it of late, with that brooding look of dreamy pre-occupation perpetually clouding eyes and brow, but as he could so well remember it in the old, happy days at Overbury, before death had entered the house—an anxious, thoughtful face, perhaps, as one could fancy the face of a guardian angel to be anxious and thoughtful, with its vicarious sorrows, but a face that could withal shine out into an intensity of joy, as he could remember it did once in the grey dawn of a memorable day, when she had laid her hand upon his shoulder, and had told him the glad news that Joyce had passed the crisis of her illness.

This vision of Mab was so real to him that it would have scarcely startled his senses if, at that very moment, she had turned the corner of the big, jutting headland, under whose shadow he stood, and had come towards him holding out both

her hands—as she had so often met him in the old days—saying: “Oh! I am so glad to see you; Joyce and I were just at that moment talking about you.”

A gull wheeled low over his head, flapping its grey wings, and uttering its long wailing cry. Was it a presage of bad weather again for the night? Frank wondered, lifting his eyes anxiously to the quarter where the sun had sunk, and whence the wind now blew.

All the colour had faded out of the sky; inky masses of clouds hung low upon the horizon; the sea showed beneath a cold stretch of iron-grey, over which the night mists were slowly spreading themselves. From out the mists, far out at sea, the “white horses” ominously lifted and tossed their curling crests.

But presently, something else besides the “white horses” seemed moving in the distant dimness. Frank strained his eyes their hardest, shading them with his hand from the dashing spray. Yes, it was a boat, and a heavily-laden boat, too; for it sat low in the water, as though its burthen were as much as it could manage. And it was also, so it seemed, making straight for Light Island. But what of that? Frank asked himself. What was there in the fact of a heavily-laden boat making straight for the shore to set his pulses throbbing at fever heat? Had he not seen scores of such boats go out and come in, all through the fishing season? What more likely than that it was a boat from one of the smacks off Faroe fishing banks charged, perhaps, with letters or light cargo for the Faroes, and anxious to run for land before a wild night set in?

As the boat came nearer, another thought succeeded. What if this boat’s load were a remnant saved from the wreck of the vessel in distress last night? What if Ned?—but here, with a strong hand, he put an end to a thought that, bordering on hope, fell little short of agony. He would just stand still and wait patiently. He had strong, far sight. Five minutes would show him who were the occupants of the boat. He would know Ned’s head and shoulders among a hundred. And what was a five minutes’ waiting compared with the months of miserable suspense he had lived through?

But, as he stood and waited, he was compelled to own that never before had five minutes spun themselves out to such an unconscionable length. On and on came the boat, slowly but steadily, its occupants

showing black against the grey of the sky, and sea above, below. Yes; it was the remnants of a wrecked crew, Frank decided; there were certain signs of distress about them there was no mistaking; some of them were hatless: one or two seemed leaning forward, elbows on knees, as though they had had a rough time of it and were well-nigh worn out. Frank’s eye strained painfully for the broad shoulders and head which were to bring deliverance to him. “I shall see better in another minute,” he muttered, trying to keep up the illusion of hope a little longer.

And in another minute he did see better, and the illusion of hope died utterly in its realisation. For in that drooping figure with head bowed and hands clasped, seated there in the stern of the boat he recognised, with a thrill of joy so intense it was near akin to a pain, the face and figure of Joyce Shenstone.

He scarcely dared trust his eyesight. “It’s the spray that’s blinding me,” he said aloud, in a voice which none would have recognised as his, it quavered so. But, nevertheless, he was in the sea in no time, and as nearly out of his depth as he could trust himself to go.

Uncle Archie looked up at the great, beetling crag. “Lift your head, child,” he said, turning to Joyce, “and thank Heaven we’re safe now. Here’s Light Island.”

The Captain dropped his glass from his eye. “Bravely pulled, well done, men,” he said. The men drew their oars into the boat, wondering much over the gaunt-looking figure with seal-cap and unkempt beard that had hailed them, and was helping to pull their boat high and dry on the beach.

But they wondered still more when, as they held out their hand to help Joyce land, the same gaunt-looking figure pushed past them, took her bodily into his arms and carried her to shore.

Thus these two sorely-tried lovers joined hands once more. There came for them one moment of rapture, of intense unutterable joy, such as no human soul can live through more than once in a lifetime, a moment not to be counted by the hands of a clock, for in its brief yet immeasurable “now” a whole miserable past was gulfed and gone.

And when tongue can find words to speak the joy of such a moment as this, Language will have reached its goal, and may fitly claim the right to halve the throne of Thought.

Frank clasped Joyce to his heart as he had never in his life clasped her before; and, as for Joyce, her breath came and went in gasps, she trembled in every fibre of her body, but words she had none.

"Is that the way they do things on the Faroes?" asked Morton solemnly, for the moment not recognising Frank, and giving the Captain a nudge as he spoke.

But Uncle Archie, like Joyce, said never a word. He only stood still on the beach, quaking and shaking from head to foot as he watched Frank and Joyce a yard from him standing silent also, holding each other's hands, looking into each other's eyes.

"Perhaps," thought the old gentleman, "by-and-by, when we reach that far-off shore towards which we are all travelling so fast, just in that way we shall greet our friends of lang syne—hold their hands, look into their eyes, say nothing."

Then another thought struck him, to which he gave utterance at once. "Men," he said in a thin, trembling voice, looking round at his shipwrecked companions, "we have been through great perils the past few hours. Before we go a step farther I should like to kneel down here on the beach, and thank the good Lord who has brought us safe to land."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the Captain, "if you'll be parson, we'll all follow lead."

So Uncle Archie knelt down on the rough pebbles, and one and all knelt down beside him, those who had hats taking them off, and Frank and Joyce clasping hands still.

"We thank thee," began Uncle Archie in a choking voice.

"We thank thee," faltered Frank in muffled tones.

Then there came a pause.

"We thank thee," began Uncle Archie again, turning upwards his old face in the twilight with tears streaming down both cheeks.

But he could get no farther, and no one else had a voice wherewith to follow him even so far.

And as for the Amen, the great sea must have said it for them, for only its voice was heard as they rose from their knees.

CHAPTER LVII.

WHEN they found their voices, however, they had enough to do with them. Never before, surely, had the old brown rocks of Light Island to echo such a buzz and hum of talk.

The sailors, both Danish and British, began telling of thorough time they had had out there in the Atlantic: how that when day broke and the wind had lulled they had found themselves miles out of their course, well on their way to Iceland; how that the tiller of their boat had broken and the Captain had been forced to steer with his hand in the water till his arm was half-frozen; how that their lips were parched and dry, for, save a half-filled brandy flask which one of them had in his pocket, drink there was none. Nor was food to be had either, even so much as a crumb of dry biscuit. And how that in this plight all through that raging storm their hard work of baling, of rowing, and of occasional desperate backing of the boat, to escape the breaking of the big waves upon her, had had to go on continuously.

All this was talked over and recapitulated again and again, as they threaded the mountain thoroughfare towards the row of inland huts, where Frank knew a hearty welcome, together with food and shelter, would be offered to the shipwrecked party.

But Frank's and Joyce's stories were yet to be told. Uncle Archie ought, perhaps, to have been the one to demand an explanation of Frank, to rush at him with a whole catechism of "whys" and "wherefores." He did not, however. He contented himself with walking side by side with the young people, his arms folded behind him, his eyes cast down. He probably felt that the strain of emotion he had already to bear was enough for the present; the "whys" and "wherefores" had better be deferred for a time. He shook his head now and again, as though at his own thoughts, as he went along; and once or twice Frank noticed that he stumbled, as though his feet could hardly carry him. Physical hardship tells heavily on the down-side of sixty.

As for Morton, he threw himself heartily on the Danish Captain for companionship; and, had anyone followed close on his heels listening to his talk, such expressions as the following might have been heard of frequent recurrence:

"I knew how it would be from the very first. I always said he was alive and hearty somewhere." This said with a nod and side glance towards Frank. "A man doesn't serve twenty-five years in a profession like mine without knowing what's what."

Frank, like Uncle Archie, felt that it was better that his story and Joyce's should be

kept waiting for awhile. The suddenness of the whole thing was overwhelming. The simple fact of walking beside Joyce in quiet, silent happiness, was utterly bewildering. It was like giving a man too much food after months of famine. The mere thought of the agony that would have been his, had he known who were outside in the darkness struggling with wind and wave for dear life, was in itself a cruel torture. He tried to shut it out of his mind; it hurt him as the recollection of some awful calamity escaped by a hair's breadth will hurt a man for hours after the danger is past.

Something else hurt him even more grievously—the still, white tragedy of Joyce's face. The anguish and long patience written upon it were easy enough to read. No joy of meeting, however intense, could efface it.

Yet though Frank said to himself it was better for them both that his story and hers should remain untold for a time, there was one question which rushed naturally to his lips. It was:

"Where is Ned? Of course it was he who told you where to find me, Joyce!"

Joyce started.

"Poor Ned!" she answered as calmly as she could. "You do not know—how could you? He was killed—shot at Greenock, no doubt by some member of his society anxious to avenge Captain Buckingham's death."

Frank almost staggered.

"Dead! Buckingham! Ned!" he said in a bewildered tone, putting his hand to his head.

Then a sudden great fear took possession of him. Those past nine months held many a dismal secret, not a doubt; and one by one, in some quiet corner they would be told to him. But there was one dread that must be set at rest at once, so he asked a question in a nervous, round-about fashion, lacking courage to put it direct.

"Joyce," he said, "I feel as the old prisoners released from the Bastille must have felt, when they began to ask after the friends they had left behind in the outer world. You and Uncle Archie I see before me alive and well, thank Heaven! but tell me who else of those I cared for are alive and well also?"

Joyce's hand held fast in his began to tremble violently.

"All your people in Gloucestershire were

well when I heard last," she answered very quietly.

Frank made an impatient movement. "I mean in your own home circle," he said.

"My mother and Aunt Bell are well also," she said, her voice now sinking very low.

"Go on."

But Joyce was silent. Then Frank knew that his great dread was realised, and that however many kindly voices might welcome him home, Mab's would not be numbered among them.

He said nothing; but he felt now that Joyce's story, when it came to be told, would hold its own against his for tragic gloom.

The sheep-dogs on watch outside the huts raised a hubbub as the party approached. Young Christian, and one or two others came out to meet them.

"You did not tell me," he said in his mixed Danish, wagging his yellow beard at Frank, "that the friend you were waiting for was a woman."

Then he welcomed the strangers heartily, entered into friendly talk with his compatriots, and with the help of the women a plentiful though simple meal was soon set before the weary travellers.

At meal time they discussed the question of sleeping arrangements. How could they make room for so many within the small compass of their huts?

Naturally the light tower suggested itself.

"It will be my last night on duty," said Frank; "some one, no doubt, will keep me company through the watch." And Uncle Archie and Joyce, feeling, in spite of their fatigue, what an impossibility sleep would be until confidences had been exchanged, hailed with delight the prospect of an eight or ten hours' quietude.

So in the little room which had been prison-house or catacomb to Frank through so many dreary months, those three sat up through the night talking and listening by turns, making each other's hearts ache over again, bringing tears to each other's eyes, words of pity to each other's lips.

Once Joyce bowed her head on the arm of the old wife's wicker chair, and her tears fell in a shower on the rusty knitting pins which lay beside it, as Frank told the story of the miserable night when he lay tied hand and foot at Ned's mercy. He would fain have glossed over this part of his narrative, but Uncle Archie would not have it. "Go on," he had said, "tell us

everything. Let her cry. It will do her good. She has been dry-eyed for many a day past."

On parts of her story Joyce touched but lightly. She dared not test her powers of self-control by going through the last day of Mab's illness, nor Frank's by giving in detail the history of Captain Buckingham's persecution. By-and-by Frank would have much to hear, not a doubt.

But once, in spite of her reticence, Frank sprang to his feet in overwhelming indignation and anger, as she told simply, without comment, her own and Uncle Archie's interview with Ned, and how that, through all those long months of suspense, the Irishman had not given them so much as a word of hope.

Frank's indignation refused restraint. Hot, angry words came in a rush to his lips.

"I can't forgive him—dead and gone though he is. He expected me to keep my faith, and he broke his! If I had but known! He had better by far have been the murderer he might have been than the coward he was."

Joyce pleaded for him, telling the story of her anonymous letter and her long hour of waiting on Chelsea Bridge.

"He made the attempt, not a doubt, to let me know a part of the truth as soon as he could. I dare say he thought that, if he had told me at first, I should have relaxed effort to find you, and so have betrayed him. Also, no doubt he saw always before him this happy end to all our misery. He was young; he loved his life——"

"Yes; and he lost it—as those deserve to who love life better than honour," interrupted Frank hotly. "Don't ask me to forgive him, Joyce. I could forgive Buckingham almost sooner than him—though Heaven knows that would be hard work enough."

But later on he made a concession; at least Joyce understood it to be such.

The day after this night-watch saw the whole party ensconced in an hotel at Thorshavn, the little capital of the Faroes, and two days after that saw them on board a homeward-bound steamer.

Frank and Joyce stood on deck looking their last at the little islands; at the staring white tower of Light Island; the steep, awful rocks, grand, and terrible in outline, soft and tender in their green and brown colouring under the subdued Arctic light.

They had stood in silence thus for a long time, while Uncle Archie seated close at hand turned over a packet of American newspapers which, just as the boat was on the point of starting, had been thrown on board by some good people for the old gentleman's especial delectation.

At last Frank spoke, words that could be applicable to nothing unless it were to the denunciatory judgements he had passed upon Ned, Buckingham, and one or two others, and to the easy fashion in which he had at one time been wont to solve the problems of life in a single word.

"The truth of it is, Joyce," he said, "we are all of us too ready to lay down the law and pass sentence on every matter under Heaven. We think it a proof of our wisdom, instead of our folly, to have an answer ready to every question that presents itself. We rush in and talk, talk, talk, where angels would veil their faces and weep in silence."

Possibly Frank, like Joyce, had not watched out long hours in solitude for nothing.

"Aye," said Uncle Archie solemnly, looking up from a paragraph he was reading, with misty eyes, "a prayer for mercy for ourselves, a cry of pity for the whole human race, these are the only words that come fitly from our lips."

The paragraph he had been reading appeared under the heading of "News from New York," and related how a young woman, in the act of landing at midnight from a Greenock steamer, had taken a false step, been precipitated into the harbour, and had been drowned, in spite of efforts made to rescue her.

The name of the woman was Kathleen O'Shea.

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Diana Durdan," "My Lord Conzil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER IV. MISUNDERSTOOD.

GRETCHEN turned to her garden, and mechanically began to tie up the plants and rake the beds once more. But her mind was absorbed, and her heart was no longer in her work.

Those beautiful myths and stories haunted her, as a first fairy-tale haunts the memory of a child. She looked at the sweet, wet, sunlit blossoms with dreaming eyes, and the birds' songs sounded afar off to her ears, wherein now rang the remembered melody of a voice, the first voice that had spoken gracious and kindly words to her for her own sake alone. "To-morrow," she thought gladly, "I shall see him again. How strange that he should live so near! and oh, how clever he is, and how kind! How much he knows! and yet he does not let me feel that he thinks me only an ignorant child. What beautiful histories those are! I wish I could read them for myself."

She let the rake fall, and clasped her hands, and stood looking up at the dewy leaves, where the singing birds were fluttering to and fro.

"How sad to be blind!" The restless thoughts ran on, and a great wave of pity swept over the innocent heart.

It was such a tender, young heart, this girl's — full of love and longing, and beautiful hopes and fair dreams; ready to throw out its delicate tendrils to any support that offered itself; brimful of exquisite possibilities, that only needed a careful hand to nurture into the greatness

and nobility of a heroic and noble life. And, with such a heart and such a nature, there she stood in her young life's fair spring-time, unloved, undesired, and misunderstood.

A hard fate truly. And yet by her scarce comprehended, so easy is it to be happy when the heart is young, and the immediate hour is existence.

How long she stood there absorbed in reverie she scarcely knew; but Lisschen's voice, sounding harsh and shrill from the house door, recalled her at last from dreams, and reminded her that breakfast would be a not unacceptable benefit after two hours in the fresh morning air. So she placed her garden tools in the tool-house, ran lightly up the gravel path, and entered the little tiled kitchen, where her cup of coffee and roll stood awaiting her.

"Where is aunt?" she asked, as she nodded questioningly to Lisschen.

"She is ill again," grumbled the old woman, "and no wonder, walking all the way from Vienna yesterday. To-day she cannot lift her head from the pillow. I have taken her her coffee, and you must not go near her or disturb her, so she bade me say. The Sister Marie will come this morning for your lessons."

"Ugh!" pouted the girl. "She is so cross and so ugly. I wish she would not come. I like Sister Cärlie so much better. Where is the grandfather?" she added.

"Shut up in his own room," snorted Lisschen. "Where else should he be? Now make haste. I have no time to waste over chatter."

She was whisking her short, brown skirts to and fro, and clattering her pans and dishes, in a way that showed her desire to have her kitchen to herself with all possible speed.

Gretchen hastily swallowed her coffee, and taking the bread in her hand, went out to the doorway to throw a shower of crumbs to the birds. The usual dull routine of the day must be gone through—the dry books read, the stiff, coarse sheets and garments hemmed for the poor. Everything that was harsh and dreary and unlovely seemed to be thrust into her hours of occupation, the better to disenchant her with the world and its vanities. It was no wonder she sometimes rebelled.

By the time the birds had finished their meal, Lisschen called to her to dust the parlour, and with a sigh she turned from the lovely sunlight and fresh, cool air to the dark room where the family usually sat. The floor had no carpet, but was in such a high state of polish and slipperiness that it was quite a perilous enterprise to walk across it. The hard, stiff chairs were arranged in a grim row against the wall. There was nothing pretty or cheerful in the way of knick-knacks, or ornaments, or even flowers. Everything was sober of tint and useful of design, and uncomfortable and hideous as the generality of German furniture used to be, and, indeed, often is at the present time, despite the advance of æsthetic art.

Long use had habituated Gretchen's eyes to the grimness and soberness of her surroundings. But she often longed for a touch of colour from flowers or plants to brighten the room or relieve the eye.

The suggestion of such a thing, however, was enough to bring down a storm of wrath from her grandfather, or a cold rebuke from the proud, handsome lips of her aunt, so the girl only sighed at their want of taste, and tried to shut her eyes to the darkness and grimness that seemed to them so admirable.

At nine, Sister Maria came, and the morning sped on, and the girl's patience and gentleness brought her through the hard tasks, and enabled her to bear the harsh sarcasms of her teacher.

At the end of the lessons, however, she summoned up courage to ask a question that had long been rankling in her mind.

"Sister Maria," she said gently, "can you tell me if it is really decided that I am to enter the Convent?"

"Of course it is," answered the Sister. "Thy grandfather has at last fixed the day—on thy seventeenth birthday thou wilt give thyself to the blessed life, and become a Sister of our holy Order."

"My seventeenth birthday!" echoed the girl. "Six months—only six months."

Then suddenly the tears rushed to her eyes, and her voice broke out into entreaty:

"Oh, Sister, tell me, please tell me, must I do this thing? You talk about a vocation, but I feel none of the blessed privilege of serving Christ as you do. Cannot I serve Him as I do now? Can I not love Him, and yet live in the world He has made so beautiful? I do not think I should be the less pitiful to his creatures or mindful of Himself by just living on free and content as I am. I know no one here loves me, or wants me—that is my misfortune; but I would try so hard to be good and gentle, and of use; and then, perhaps, in time they might forget that I was once a sorrow to them, and so let me live here to tend them, and love them as the years go on."

Earnestness had banished her tears. The longings of her heart, that had at last broken the bonds of an enforced silence, burst forth in natural appeal for love and freedom.

The panting, passionate words rang out as might a prisoner's cry for liberty. In the doorway beyond a figure stood and heard, as if turned to stone. One hand was pressed to her heart, as if in pain, and there was a look of agony in her eyes that not even years of self-mastery could banish.

"Hush!" cried the Sister, and raised a warning finger.

The girl's eyes turned to the spot it indicated. Her colour faded; a strange, humbled look came into the lovely eyes. She moved forward and touched the listless hand with her warm young lips.

"Aunt, have I disturbed you? I am sorry."

With a terrible effort the proud face regained its calm. The girl's hand was put aside, and the erect, graceful figure moved on to its accustomed place. Meekly the girl followed.

"Lisschen said that you were ill, that you could not leave your room," she said gently.

"I am better," was the cold response. "Are the lessons finished, Sister Maria? What was that eager discussion about?"

"The Fräulein Gretchen is somewhat excited this morning," was the reply. "It will be well for her to retire to her own room and read this homily on patience and resignation; and I should also recommend

some mortification of the flesh in the way of fasting for to-day. She has displayed an evil and rebellious spirit."

The proud, cold woman raised her head and looked at the girl. Something of yearning, of pity checked, and repressed, and forced down into unnatural composure, spoke out in that rapid glance. Then her eyes fell.

"You hear, Gretchen," she said calmly.

The girl turned away; her lips quivered; the hot colour flushed to her very brow in a passionate tide. Without another word she took the proffered book from Sister Maria's hands and left the room. At the door she paused and looked back at the two figures—rigid, watchful, self-controlled as she, in her passionate youth, could never hope to be.

"Oh, why do you misjudge me so?" she cried, with momentary entreaty. "Indeed, indeed I try to be good and do what you wish; but no one loves me; and no one cares!"

There was no response, only the grim face of Sister Maria turned to that quiet figure seated in the darkest corner of the dark and dreary room. It almost seemed as if she expected, and, in some eager and thirsty way, watched for a change in the calm face, a quiver of the marble lips; but there was none.

Immoveable, expressionless, beautiful as a statue, but even as a statue without life, and without feeling, so did she look while the plaintive appeal of that sad young voice still filled the room with its echoes.

"I think," croaked the harsh tones of Sister Maria, "I think, Fräulein von Waldstein, that it would be well if your niece were allowed less liberty of speech and action for these next six months. She grows somewhat opinionated and restive. She has made no new friends, I suppose?"

"Friends!" echoed that strange, cheerless voice. "No. She speaks to no one. She never goes out save with Lisschen or myself."

"Still there is a change somewhere," said the Sister thoughtfully. "She is not so meek or so heedful of rebuke as she was."

"She is very young," said Anna von Waldstein, in the same dull, measured way. "It is hard for the young to be always gloomy and repressed."

Her thin, white fingers were busy with some work she had taken up. Her face looked like a marble mask.

"Still she must be taught her duty," pursued the Sister vindictively. "Others have had to learn the same task, to repress the same longings, to vanquish the same desires. Life has its measure of suffering for every heart; none is exempt."

"No," echoed the calm voice bitterly. "Only some have a larger measure than others crowded into their lives. You know that, Sister."

"Those who suffer for others suffer doubly, you would say. It is Heaven's will. We must not rebel. If Gretchen suffers for her mother's sin, she but expiates a universal law. The sins of the guilty fall on the innocent."

There was no response. The white fingers went on mechanically with their work. The face never lost its look of frozen calm. The Sister gathered up her books and glanced at the clock.

"My time is up," she said grimly. "Father Joseph bade me tell you that the child has not been to confession this week. Will you remind her?"

"I will bring her to-morrow—myself," was the answer.

"Then I will wish you good-morrow, Fräulein von Waldstein."

As the door closed, as the heavy tread ceased to echo in the little paved hall, there came a strange alteration over the quiet face of Anna von Waldstein. The work fell from her hands; the hands themselves were clasped and lifted upwards, as in a sudden agony of appeal to some unknown and merciless power, that held her in its thrall. Such agony, such suffering, such an imploring voiceless cry never surely rent the soul of martyr, or of sinner. The proud eyes—proud no longer in that moment's broken calm—gazed upwards as if seeking to pierce the very realms of Heaven itself. The clasped hands wrung themselves together, and were flung out as if in search of—what? Something lost, yet nigh? Another hand, whose touch might thrill them with remembered joy; another clasp to calm and soothe the trembling passion of their own? The kiss of silent lips; the curls of a young child's head; the magic something which might have changed life and set its frozen currents to the music of love and bliss?

Perhaps for some of these—perhaps all—perhaps none. Within her heart a cry sounded, taking vengeance for long years of repression, forcing its way upwards through the close-bound gates of secrecy and self-control.

"No one to love her." That was what the child said. "No one to love her! Oh, if I only dared—if I only, only dared!"

CHAPTER V. THE DAWN.

GRETCHEN sat alone in her little room. A fierce feeling of indignation throbbed in her heart, and fired her gentle nature into wrath.

"I can't bear it," she said. "Oh, I can't bear it! Life is surely not meant to be a prison—a penance—something from which all light and joy are shut out for ever! What have I done that I should be doomed to such a fate?"

She paced to and fro the bare floor of her chamber like some wild, caged creature in its first hours of rebellion. She had never in all her life before felt such an indignant hatred of the circumstances of that life. But then, never before had the cage door been opened, or such sweet, tantalising glimpses of freedom given. Life, with its storied elements of romance—love, passion, delight—had been as a veiled picture before her eyes; but now the veil had been lifted, a glimpse of a hidden paradise revealed, and the thought that a living grave was her fate, and all such joys forbidden, filled her with a horror that words could not frame, a passionate rebellion that almost terrified herself. She had thrown her book on the bed; she turned to her window, and looked out longingly at the bright sunshine.

Then her eyes strayed from that altitude of sky and hill to the nearer level of the garden. From thence again they wandered to that jealously shut out domain, which was now invested with such special interest. The trees were high, and the drooping branches made a partial screen; but there was one little break among the boughs which permitted her to see a smooth green lawn and a figure seated on a low lounging chair.

Her heart beat quicker. Here at least was an interest for her in her hours of imprisonment.

"If he could only see!" she thought regretfully, as her own eyes took in, with a strange familiar gladness, the grace and strength of the handsome figure.

But he had resumed the old disfiguring bandage, and was lying lazily back under the trees, smoking a cigarette. Still, the very fact of having someone to watch and speculate about, some new interest in her life's daily monotony, was pleasant to the

girl; and she softly opened the little window, and knelt there, with eager gaze and quick fancies, and her sorrows half forgotten.

Time passed on. The young Englishman had finished his cigarette, and was dozing in his chair. Still the girl knelt there by the open window and watched, and a thousand sweet fancies drifted through her mind, and wove themselves into a romance more fit for fairyland than for reality.

She seemed quite forgotten. No one came near her. She had had no food since breakfast, and began to feel quite conscious of the fact.

Presently the Englishman's servant appeared on the scene, and led his master into the house. After that Gretchen felt her interest in the garden considerably lessened, and she rose from her position at the window, and took up the discarded book.

Just as she had begun the dry homily prescribed by Sister Maria, the door was abruptly opened, and Liesschen entered with a tray containing some soup and bread.

She put the tray down on the chair by the window, and then turned to the girl with a little less gruffness and harshness than usual.

"This is to be all your dinner," she said. "I call it a shame. Youth is for something better than starving and book-learning. So the Sister has had you punished again."

"Yes, Liesschen," answered the girl, flinging aside the book once more. "Oh, I am so hungry," she added joyfully, "I thought you had forgotten all about my dinner."

"Sit down and eat," said Liesschen, drawing up a stool and seating herself on it. "I do not make two journeys when one will do."

The girl needed no second biddings. Had she been less keen of appetite she might have noticed the intent, yet covert scrutiny, of the old woman's eyes. It almost seemed as if some new light had dawned upon them—as if, in place of long familiarity, a startling and unexpected discovery had flashed.

"Gretchen," she said at last, "you have kept your own counsel about the English gentleman yesterday."

The girl looked hastily up, her face flushing like a rose. "But, yes," she said, "you told me to do so, Liesschen."

"True," nodded the old woman, and

a faint smile curled the corners of her mouth. "And I tell you so still. There may be great good fortune in store for you, child. Mind, I say no more, only let those watch, who think they can see. Sister Maria, indeed!"

She tossed her head contemptuously.

Gretchen laid down her spoon and looked at her in astonishment.

"Good fortune for me! Oh, no, Lisschen. That is too much to expect. They told me to-day that everything is arranged. I am to enter the Convent on my seventeenth birthday. What can alter that?"

Again that odd smile quivered round the old woman's mouth.

"You have a fair face," she said. "Such faces do not lend themselves readily to a nun's hood, or a convent cell. Oh, do not open your eyes too wide. I know what I know. A rich and handsome husband would suit you better than a life of penance and piety. Well, I was young myself once, and well-favoured too, and I know what a lover's tongue promises."

Gretchen had risen to her feet now; her face was pale, her eyes wide and astonished. Lisschen—surly, cross-grained old Lisschen to speak like this—what had chanced to her?

"What do you mean?" she asked breathlessly. "Has—has anyone been speaking to you?"

The old woman lowered her voice and came nearer.

"I went down the Hauptstrasse this morning," she said cautiously. "I met someone who spoke to me of—you. Well, well, why should I not tell it? He is the servant of the Englishman. His master is rich and great, and he has fallen in love with you. Your fortune is made, Gretchen, and of a surety it will suit you better to be loved and wedded than to pass your life within convent walls. I said I would tell you, and I have done it. For the rest you must please yourself. You look surprised. I am only crabbed old Lisschen, who have had more cross words than kind for thee! So—but my heart felt for thee all the same, and I would help thee from thy cage if thou hast a mind to fly!"

But Gretchen only stood there silent for very amazement. The rich blood dyed her cheeks; her pulses beat wildly. She could scarcely credit all she heard. To leave this hard, cold, loveless life; to be rich, beloved, happy, free! It seemed to her as if she did but dream.

The transformation in Lisschen amazed her too. She could not believe that the grim old serving-woman could have softened towards her so suddenly. Unhappily, for herself she was too unsuspicious to fathom the real reason, or attribute sordid or interested motives. Léon Bari had played the part of Mephistopheles fairly well, and Lisschen had not been proof against a golden bribe. At first she was astounded at the bare idea of the child having made the conquest he hinted; but when its proof came home to her in substantial results for herself, she thought it would be no great sin to help the girl to fortune and happiness, and reward her own exertions by independence from that time.

"It seems like a fairy-tale," cried Gretchen at last. "I to be loved—married! Freed from this hateful bondage! Oh, Lisschen, can it really, really be true?"

"It is quite true, child; but you must be careful, very careful. Sharp eyes are upon us, and to be discovered means ruin. You must learn your tasks and submit yourself as of old. But I will contrive that you shall have your lover. Do not fear for that."

"My—lover!"

The girl's face grew rosy red with shy and sudden shame. But that very morning she had asked what a lover was, and now to have one of her very own. It was incredible.

"He can't be—that, Lisschen," she faltered. "He scarcely knows me; he has only seen me twice."

"It does not need much seeing for love to come," answered the old woman. "Once will do it, for the matter of that! Now take this. 'Tis the key of the garden-gate leading into the woods. Be there to-morrow by five o'clock, as you were to-day. No one will miss the key. I have always had it. Only do not tarry too long, for thy grandfather may walk in the garden and miss thee. Now I must go, or they will wonder. You are to stay in your room all the rest of the day. But I have given thee something better to think of than Sister Maria's homilies, have I not?"

But the girl was too astounded and bewildered to speak. She only stood there with the sweet colour coming and going in her cheeks; stood there believing that she must surely dream—that soon, only too soon, she would waken to the old dreary, lonely life again.

When the door had closed on Lisschen,

she threw herself on her bed and buried her face in her arms. Life—thought—feeling—the whole world was changed for her! The innocence and ignorance of childhood seemed to fall away, and before her lay a golden, dazzling region of possibilities hitherto undreamt of. She had been so drilled into thinking a religious life her whole future, that the first thrill of relief, the promise of freedom, the hint of unimagined joys lying beyond the golden gates of liberty almost terrified her with the gladness and wonder that they brought her heart.

The sunlight faded at last. The glow and fervour of day lost its meaning as the hours drifted by. She rose and looked around as one who wakes from a dream. "Am I really myself?" she asked, as she caught sight of her face in the little mirror, staring at its reflection as if it were something altogether unknown.

Then a smile broke over her lips.

"It will soon be to-morrow now," she thought. "I wonder what he will say to me!"

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

ABERDEEN AND BANFF.

IN some way or other the citizens of Aberdeen have earned for themselves a character that is, in a measure, distinct and peculiar. They are cannie, cool, and dour in popular estimation. The cauld kale of Aberdeen is typical of the frosted manners of the people; the granite city is the abode of people whose character is moulded on the square and rigid forms of their native rock. An "Aberdeen sweetie," as Scottish children well know, is nothing more toothsome than a vigorous crack on the head, with a flip of the thumb; and the same austerity and rigour shows itself in other popular pleasantries.

With these impressions on his mind, the stranger visiting Aberdeen will be agreeably surprised to find a somewhat lively, and certainly handsome, city, whose inhabitants, in culture and hospitality, are rather pre-eminent than the reverse, compared with the rest of the Isle of Britain. Long the chief seat of the foreign commerce of the Scottish kingdom, Aberdeen, although now far outstripped by Glasgow in population and extent, still can boast a strong and solid prosperity.

Aberdeen is one of the most ancient

cities in the kingdom, although it contains but few remains of its earlier days. Chroniclers mention a Bull by Pope Gregory in the ninth century, which conferred civic rights upon the settlement; and there is an existing Charter of William the Lion, which carries us back into the twelfth century. In spite of its Celtic name Aberdeen was, we may believe, mainly a Scandinavian settlement, at all events as far as its shipping population were concerned, and carried on an early trade with the Baltic and with the seaboard of Northern Europe. The men of Aberdeen were a stout, stubborn race, and full of fight, and although, after the battle of Falkirk and the ruin of the national cause, they were obliged to admit an English garrison, yet they bided their time; and when Robert Bruce appeared again in the field they rose and massacred their English garrison, and gave their allegiance to the Bruce. Hence the city arms bestowed by the King in memory of this service—three towers, triply towered, with the motto "Bon Accord," which was the watchword of the citizens. Thirty years later, Edward the Third of England ravaged the Earldom of Mar, and burnt Aberdeen to the ground. The town was soon rebuilt upon the same site, and thus became known as New Aberdeen.

New Aberdeen was chiefly built of wood, but was enclosed within walls and towers of strength, which were patrolled night and day by the burgher guard. Here money was coined at the Royal mint, and the King often lodged and held his Royal Court within the walls.

It was when the young Prince James the First of Scotland was a prisoner in England, and the crown of Scotland seemed to be at the disposal of the first bold man who dared to grasp it, that Donald, Lord of the Isles, and lord also of great territories among the Western Highlands, who claimed all the dignity of an independent monarch, left his wilds, at the head of a fine force of ten thousand brave Highlanders, and, descending the valley of the Dee, arrived within ten miles of Aberdeen at a place called Harlaw. The Earl of Mar had gathered together an array of Lowland gentlemen—of the Lowlands of the north, that is—from the plains of Moray, and Buchan, and Strathmore. For once all these Lowland chiefs were in accord, since the success of the Highlanders involved ruin and exile to the Sassenach.

This was the last chance of the Gael in Scotland, and the success of the day would have left him master of all the North of Scotland, even as far as the ancient Roman rampart, that crossed the isthmus between the Forth and the Clyde. The men of Aberdeen, too, mustered in strength under their Provost, Sir Robert Davidson, and marched forth to join the Earl of Mar.

The Highlanders attacked with their usual desperate courage; but the phalanx of the Scottish Lairds and their tenants, a phalanx of long spears such as had broken the English chivalry at Bannockburn, held together even against the fierce Highland rush. But the Lowlanders lost heavily, more than five hundred brave gentlemen bit the dust, and the Provost of Aberdeen died at the head of his townfolk. The Highlanders, however, lost twice as many men, and seeing no prospect of the plunder of Aberdeen, to which they had been looking forward as the crowning mercy of the campaign, retreated sullenly and unmolested to their hills. We may imagine that the Provost had a fine funeral in the old Church of St. Nicholas, where his tomb is still to be seen; but the citizens were of opinion that their Provost was too important a personage to be wasted on a fight, however glorious, and resolved that henceforth no Provost should go beyond the limits of his jurisdiction in his official capacity.

The battle was fought in 1411, and half a century afterwards we find the citizens entering into a bond of manrent with their powerful neighbour the Earl of Huntly, chief of all the Gordons. The Earl was to fight for the city if there were any occasion. On the other hand, a contingent of the townfolk were to join his forces when he was on the war path, always saving their allegiance to the King.

But it was found that the Earl was more in the way of getting into hot water than the city, and when he called for his Aberdonian contingent some excuse was sure to be ready for not supplying it; and so the arrangement led rather to heart-burning and bickering than concord.

Already in 1450 the town was provided with a public clock, which shows how the citizens were abreast, if not ahead, of their times. And when, after Sauchieburn fight, and the death of James the Third, Lord Forbes and others tried to raise the city, and make it pronounce against the faction who had the young King in custody, the magistrates of the city were too cautious

to embroil their city in the affair. Nor had they any reason to complain of the young King, who assisted their Bishop, Elphinstone, in the foundation of an ecclesiastical college in the neighbouring village of Old Aberdeen, as it came to be called—the Papal Bull for which was issued in 1494.

In 1497, during the short war waged with England in support of Perkin Warbeck, the Aberdonians built a block-house to defend their haven from the attack of English ships; but the English did not come to test the strength of their defences. After Flodden, too, when the whole land was filled with dismay, the citizens established a watch on the south side of the river at the bell-house, to raise a fire, as a signal to arm and muster, at the first sight of a hostile sail. But again the English fleet failed to enter an appearance, and Aberdeen suffered nothing but the grief and dismay which she shared with the whole kingdom. Perhaps Aberdeen, however, might be specially moved at the fate of the gallant King James, for not only was he the benefactor of the neighbouring college, but he had visited the town more than once riding with a solitary attendant, on the way to the shrine of St. Duthac, in Ross, a favourite resort of his in the feverish remorse that troubled him.

That sixteenth century was a chequered and troubled time for the city altogether. With news of disasters and rumours of invasion, came the plague in 1514, and then in the disorders of the King's minority, the city was suddenly entered by Seaton and Leslies, on some offence given or taken, who slaughtered many of the inhabitants. These at last mustered in such strength as to drive away their assailants. In 1546 pestilence was once more raging in the city, and the plague-stricken were carried outside the walls to the links, and there placed in tents—an excellent sanitary arrangement which seems to have saved the city from depopulation. Again in 1562 came a visitation from the Royal army—or Murray's army as it might be called, although the young Queen rode at the head of it. That army had come against the Gordons, with whom the Aberdonians had long lived in a kind of jealous friendship. It seemed doubtful whether the Gordons would not have the best of the campaign, and the Queen was received with doubtful loyalty, so great was the awe inspired by the chief of the

Gordons. But when the Royal army came back victorious with the news that Huntly was slain and his men dispersed, the people threw up their caps and shouted for the Queen—and shouted as loudly when young Sir John Gordon was beheaded, three days after the battle.

Before the century was ended, however, the Gordons were on their feet again, and in 1594, when the townsfolk had taken prisoners three Romish priests who were passing through the city in disguise, the Lords Huntly, Errol, and Angus rescued the prisoners from the Tolbooth, and threatened to return and visit the town with fire and sword—a threat that would most likely have been punctiliously carried out, had not the King roused the country against the insurgent Lords, and starved them into submission.

Last plague of all in this strange eventful century was a plague of witches, always plentiful in this old country of the Picts, whose descendants took naturally to the black art. In 1596-97 no fewer than twenty-two witches were burnt on the Castle Hill, and still the cruel maw of popular superstition was unsated.

In the great religious disputes of the succeeding century, between Pielacy and Presbyterianism, the city of Aberdeen was long the stronghold of the former party. The seat of a bishopric, and with two richly-endowed colleges—for the Mareschal College of Aberdeen had been founded A.D. 1593, by George Keith, Earl Mareschal—Aberdeen found its sympathy strongly engaged for Episcopacy. When other cities joined the Covenant, Aberdeen stood up for King and Church, and, for so doing, was attacked, in 1639, by Leslie and Lord Montrose.

And then, by a curious countermarch of affairs, Aberdeen, as time went on, turned towards the Covenant, while Montrose had been brought round the other way by the personal influence of King Charles. And, in 1645, Montrose again appeared under the walls of the city, and summoned it to surrender, this time to the King's forces. By some treachery or misadventure the messenger, who had borne the summons to surrender, was murdered on his way back to Montrose's camp, and the General, in fierce rage and indignation, forthwith attacked a force of the citizens who had mustered outside the city walls, and drove them headlong into the town, and, storming in after them, gave the city to pillage, and put many of its inhabitants to the sword.

All this was the more grievous, in that the citizens of Aberdeen had little zeal for the cause in which they suffered, while the rough Highlanders and the wild Irishry plundered, burnt, and slaughtered without making invidious distinctions as to sect or party.

In the second year after the sack of Aberdeen came the plague to complete the work of the spoiler, and the old city was reduced to a woful state. Yet the place soon recovered from the effects of war and pestilence, retaining always its attachment to Episcopacy and the Stuarts. Thus, in 1715, the Pretender was proclaimed King of Scotland before the Town House of Aberdeen, and, when he presently landed at Peterhead and passed through Aberdeen, the magistrates were friendly, although fearful, and a thousand pounds were levied among the citizens, without much difficulty, for the support of the Stuart cause.

The revival of prosperity was aided by a considerable development of trade with the rising colonies of North America, and a scarcely legitimate traffic sprang up with the loyal Cavaliers of Virginia, in the supply of labour for the plantations. The neighbouring country was poor and barren, and yet populous; children were many and hard to keep; and the merchants in human flesh offered a free passage to the New World for boys and youths whose parents would sign a contract indenture. In many cases such legal formalities would be dispensed with, and it was said that likely youths ran a chance of being kidnapped on the very quays of Aberdeen and smuggled off to Virginia. Such, at all events, was the story of one Peter Williamson, who found his way back to Aberdeen, and published a pamphlet, about the year 1758, purporting to be a narrative of French and Indian cruelty, but which contained severe reflections on the merchants and magistrates of Aberdeen.

According to Peter's account, apart from the original kidnapping, his lot had not been a hard one. He was landed at Philadelphia, with a shipload of other young people, who were sold at about sixteen pounds a head. He was purchased by a brother Scot, who treated him kindly, and, dying, left him a substantial legacy. Peter married a young woman of property, and his subsequent misfortunes may be attributed to the French and Indians, or, perhaps, to his own want of prudence. But anyhow, Peter's story made a great sensation in Aberdeen. The magistrates and

chief merchants were highly indignant. Peter was fined, expelled the city, and his pamphlet was publicly burnt by the common hangman. The good folks of Glasgow and Edinburgh, however, took up Peter's cause, and, as Williamson was at last awarded a substantial indemnity, it seems probable that there was a considerable basis of truth in his revelations.

While Aberdeen took no direct part in the rebellion of 1745, yet stirring scenes were enacted in its streets, and the sympathies of the inhabitants were strongly for Prince Charlie. In '45, General Cope, the Johnnie Cope of ballad fame, after his futile march to Inverness in search of the Prince, hastily embarked his troops at Aberdeen and sailed away to the scene of his defeat at Prestonpans. Soon after, Lord Lewis Gordon took possession of the city on behalf of the Prince. The Laird of Macleod, who had declared for King George, advanced with his people to drive the rebels out, but was defeated by the Gordons at Inverurie. February, 1746, saw the redcoats marching over the Bridge of Dee with Cumberland at their head, and then came the news of Culloden, when a general illumination was ordered in honour of the glorious victory. But the streets of Aberdeen were dark that night; a few candles here and there only served to increase the general gloom; and the soldiery, incensed at the aspect of things, took to smashing people's windows as a stimulus to the loyalty of the city.

Perhaps the Jacobite feeling lasted longer in Aberdeen than in any other town in Scotland. Even as late as 1803, when the Ross and Cromarty Regiment were quartered in the town, and King George's birthday was celebrated by a banquet in the town house, a town's mob congregated about the scene in anything but a loyal temper. When the officers reeled down the steps, having drunk the King's health with more zeal than prudence, they were set upon and pelted by all the boys of the town. The regiment was turned out to avenge the insult to the Crown and its officers; a volley was fired upon the crowd, and many were killed and wounded. For this several officers were put upon their trial, but it does not seem that any were punished.

In the last years of the eighteenth century, there lived on a flat in one of the houses in Broad Street, a certain Mrs. Byron, who had once been Catherine Gordon of Gight, with her little son,

handsome but slightly lame, who should by rights have been heir to the ancient lordship of Gight.

O whare are ye gaeing, bonny Miss Gordon,
O whare are ye gaeing sae bonny and braw?
Ye've married wi' Johnny Byron
To squander the lands o' Gight awa'!

Poor Mrs. Byron had not even the small satisfaction of helping to spend her own money; her gallant Captain had done that in advance, and the lands that had been in her family for more than four centuries, were sold to pay the debts her husband had contracted before his marriage. A bare hundred and fifty pounds a year were all the poor woman had to subsist upon, and with which to educate her boy. The poet Lord Byron has himself given us some account of his early days in Aberdeen, and the old bridge o' Balgownie still remains to await the fulfilment of the prophecy that impressed the imagination of young Byron:

Brig o' Balgownie, black's your wa';
Wi' a wife's ae son, and a mare's ae foal
Down ye shall fa'.

Master Byron himself was "a wife's ae son;" but he had nothing in the way of a horse, unless, perhaps, a wooden one upon wheels. But later on, the young Earl of Aberdeen, the new owner of Gight, was also an "ae son," and rode "a mare's ae foal"; so that always when he had occasion to cross the brig he took the precaution to dismount and have his horse led after him, lest haply ancient prophecy should be vindicated in his person.

The old tower of Gight is now a ruin, but was inhabited up to the time of its sale in 1787. It lies in the parish of Fyvie, North Aberdeen. The bog o' Gight is a familiar name in the annals of the family of Gordon, and, as this powerful race was intimately connected with Aberdeen and Banff, as well as the adjoining province of Moray, it may be well to give a short account of its history.

The Gordons were originally a Border family, and were settled in Strathbogie by Robert Bruce, on the forfeited estates of the former Lord of Strathbogie, who had been a partisan of the English faction, one of those disinherited Lords who came back presently with Edward Balliol to reclaim their belongings. The particular Strathbogie known in England as David Hastings, who drove the Gordons from their seat, was presently disposed of in the forest of Braemar, where Lindsays and Douglasses, and perhaps a Gordon or two, set upon

him unawares and slew him. From this time the Gordons increased and flourished, till the elder branch came to an untimely end with young Sir Adam Gordon, who was killed at the battle of Homildon, fighting against Hotspur and the Percys, leaving only a young daughter as lawful issue. Sir Adam's heiress married Alexander Seaton, who took the name and arms of Gordon, and thus the chief line is known as that of the Seaton-Gordons, or sometimes as the Bowl o' Meal Gordons. This last epithet is due to the fact that the Gordons, living among the broken clans of the Highland border, strove to attach them as much as possible to the family interests by inducing these scattered families — Macintoshes, Macpharlanes, and the like—to adopt the name of Gordon, the fee for such a change of name being the proverbial bowl of meal. Thus, although the Gordons were never a real Highland clan, yet they assumed many of the characteristics of such, and pursued their feuds and forays in the same zealous manner and with the same clannish spirit.

There were other Gordons, earlier offshoots from the family stem, and these were known as the "ancient Gordons," or otherwise, "the Jock and Tam Gordons," from two popular heroes :

Jock and Tam's gane o'er the sea,
Joy be in their companie.

The line of Seaton-Gordons soon rose to distinction, in the person of Elizabeth Gordon's eldest son, Alexander, who was created Earl of Huntly; the same who stuck so manfully to the King's side in the Douglas wars, and defeated Earl Beardsie in the land of the Lindsays. This Gordon greatly increased the family possessions by marrying successively two heiresses, the last of whom brought the Bog o' Gight as part of her tocher. Alexander's son, George, succeeded him, and founded Gordon Castle, near Fochabers, Banffshire. George's third son was William of Gight, the ancestor of Lord Byron. Several generations passed away, and then the power of the Earls Huntly grew formidable under George the Ambitious, who spread himself everywhere, especially over the fertile plain of Moray. The Gordons were warm in the old faith, and the men of Moray were as zealous for the new; and thus arose the old saying :

The gule, the Gordon, and the hoodie craw,
Are the three worst things that Moray ever saw.

When Queen Mary determined on leaving France to come and reign in Scotland, it is said that Lord Huntly offered to

receive the Queen at Aberdeen, and accompany her at the head of twenty thousand men, to reinstate the Romish Church, and put matters generally upon a proper footing. But Mary declined the offer, and was probably warned by her relatives the Guises, that a noble so powerful should be extinguished at the earliest possible moment. Anyhow, the Queen at once outraged the Gordons by bestowing the Earldom of Moray upon her brother—with the bar sinister—James Stuart, the Regent Murray of after days, and she put herself at the head of a small army to install the new Earl in his possessions.

Lord Huntly, after some hesitation, took up arms, and met the Royal troops with a superior force at a place called Corrichee. But victory fell to the skilful dispositions of the new Earl of Moray, and in the rout that followed, the stout and burly Huntly was trampled down and smothered in his armour, while his son was taken prisoner and presently decapitated.

From this time we hear little of the Gordons till the time of stout Huntly's grandson George, who distinguished himself by killing the young Earl of Moray at Dunbrissel in 1592. Two years later Argyle, who had a commission from the King to seize Lord Huntly, led his Highlanders against the Gordons. But Lord Huntly beat the Campbells soundly at Glenlivat, and having broken the King's peace and defied his authority on every possible occasion, he was received into favour at Court, made a Marquis in 1599, and died in 1636, full of years and honours. The second Marquis fell upon evil times in the civil wars. The Gordons were mistrusted by Charles, who had deprived their chief of his two hereditary shrievalties, and thus the Marquis had supported the Royal cause in but a lukewarm manner. But he lost his head all the same, when Montrose was executed, and then Argyle, the hereditary enemy of the clan, took possession of Gordon Castle.

The House of Gordon now seemed humbled to the dust. Argyle held claims on the Gordon estates to the amount of a million of marks—Scots be it understood—and there seemed to be little chance of ever loosening the hold of the Campbell on the family possessions. But Argyle's forfeiture in 1661, saved the Gordons from ruin. King Charles cancelled the whole debt, and the Gordons were in better plight than ever. The Marquis was made

Duke in 1684, and there was nothing more to fear in the way of attainder or forfeiture. The last of the Dukes of Gordon died in 1836, and since then the title has been borne by the Duke of Richmond as an appendage to his original title, inheriting that and the more substantial Castle Gordon through a female ancestor. The chief of the House of Gordon, however, is the present Marquis of Huntly, who springs from an earlier offset.

While the lowlands of Aberdeen are, for the most part, cheerless and gloomy, with only bleak moors and dismal mosses to diversify the face of the country, by following the valley of the Dee towards the Highlands, we come to sweet and varied scenes of mountain, loch, and river. Here in a rich level, within a beautiful sweep of the river Dee, stands the Royal Castle of Balmoral, whose tower, a hundred feet high, commands an extensive range of wild picturesqueness, and of luxuriant beauty and cultivation, in the very lap of the stern mountains.

The district is known as Braemar, where, in former days, popular legends were all of the Farquharsons, who were the chiefs of the secluded vale. According to tradition, the founder of the family was a gipsy kind of body, who gained the good will of the daughter and heiress of the ruling Laird. The first of note of this family is Finla, who seems to be partly a historical character, as he is reported to have been killed at the battle of Pinkie. But the manner in which he cleared the Glen of Aberaider bears traces, we may hope, of a mythic manner of treatment. There were, it seems, far too many small landowners in Aberaider, troublesome people, who looked upon Finla with distrust, distrust that was not altogether unfounded. For Finla had been recently appointed bailiff of the district by the Earl of Mar; and one of the first exercises of his power was to summon all his neighbours of Aberaider to attend his court. Nineteen small Laids obeyed the summons, and were introduced one by one into the district Court, which was held at one end of a large barn. Finla sat as judge, his henchmen were the officers of the Court. Each Laird, as he entered, was indicted, tried, convicted, and sentenced in the twinkling of an eye, and the hangman was in waiting to trice him neatly up, with one of the rafters of the barn for a gallows tree. The last of the nineteen Laids, however, becoming suspicious when he saw

so many of his friends enter the Court, not one of whom returned, made tracks in an opposite direction and escaped.

Naturally enough, there were complaints of the way in which justice was administered in Braemar. The fairness of the trial, indeed, could not be questioned, to do that would have been contempt of Court; but the legal point was raised, that the Court had not been held openly, as is the essence of a Court of Justice, but in a closed building. To this it was triumphantly answered, "that the Court-house had more windows than days in the year," the barn having been a wattled construction, with any number of openings to the light of day.

A more terrible, and, probably, a truer story is that told by Walter Scott, of the vengeance of the Gordons, when the Farquharsons were hemmed in and massacred, and only the children of tender years spared from the slaughter. These were taken to Castle Gordon, and fed like pigs from a trough, till the Laird of Grant took compassion on them, and had them distributed among his clan for decent bringing up.

The vale of the Don will also lead us to the wild scenes of the Highlands, and on the headwaters of the river, commanding one of the passes, stands Kildrummie Castle, once the refuge of the wife of Robert Bruce, his youngest brother, Nigel, and the Countess of Buchan. How the Castle was taken, Nigel put to death, and the Countess of Buchan imprisoned in a cage in Berwick Castle, is familiar to all acquainted with the history of the days of Bruce. At a later period Kildrummie was held by the sister of Bruce, against Edward Balliol and the disinherited Lords.

A railway now runs through Strathbogie, and by its means we may soon reach Banff, a well situated coast-town, with the modern village of Macduff on the opposite side of the river.

A virtuous people doth inhabit thee,
And this, O Banff! thy greatest praise must be.

But Banff has attractions more appreciated by connoisseurs in the pleasantness of its surroundings, and the shaded privacy of the charming grounds of Duffhouse.

There was plundering done at Banff in 1644, when the Laird of Gight, and others, with forty musqueteers, all brave gentlemen, went down to Banff and seized all the town's magazine of arms, buff coats, pikes, swords, carabines, pistols, "yea, and money also," the taxes of the town, that is, which the Laird of Gight ventured to

borrow for his necessities. For this, Sir George of Gight was tried before the Parliament at Edinburgh, and it might have gone hard with him, but the Session was prorogued, and he escaped scot free.

Then, when Cumberland marched through the town on his way to Culloden, the troops crossing the river in boats, it is told how an old man of the town was caught with a notched stick in his hand, on which it was suspected he was marking the number of boats that crossed the river, and for this he was forthwith hanged as a spy.

In 1759, French Thurot appeared on the coast with his squadron, threatening a landing, perhaps in concert with disaffected Jacobites along the shore. But a storm dispersed the ships, and Banff set to work to build and man a battery, so that foreigners might not flout it again with impunity. But the guns were taken away in the long peace, and lodged in the Tower, and Banff is once more defenceless.

GOING.

Moving about the quiet ways,

Sitting beside the hearth,

Joining as best she can and may

In the careless household mirth;

Yet always through the haunted night,

As through the restless day,

Feeling—another hour is passed,

Of the time that flies away.

The last frail strand of the cable

Is parting, slow and sure,

That never again to the harbour side

My bonny boat will moor.

My bonny boat, that may come again,

God temper the wave and wind!

To gladden sad eyes and yearning hearts,

That now are left behind;

May come again, but not to lie

Safe by the old home shore;

The anchor of youth is almost weighed,

They will cast it never more.

And it's oh, and it's oh, for the sinking dread,

It's oh for the climbing sorrow,

As ever the cruel, creeping night

Brings on the weary morrow!

Love that is true must hush itself,

Nor pain by its useless cry,

For the young must go, and the old must bear,

And time goes by, goes by.

THE CANNINGS.

Who knows Saint Mary Redcliffe? It is a "perpendicular," i.e., fifteenth-century church, all built at the same time, almost as big as a small cathedral. If you are forced to choose between seeing it and Bristol Cathedral, I would say, "give up the latter." Even if you do not leave

the railway, you can hardly help noticing its fine tower, and spire, and splendid porch; for, true to its name, it stands well above the smoke and dust which hide the lower levels of what was once the second city in England. Its founder was a friend of Edward the Fourth; at least he had the honour of entertaining that King and lending him money. And thus, like so many of our best churches, it dates from the Wars of the Roses.

That must have been a strange time. The nobles kept flying at each other's throats till, like the famous Kilkenny cats, they had well-nigh annihilated one another, leaving free scope for Tudor tyranny, which was able to set the poor remnants of the aristocracy at defiance; but the lower strata of society seem hardly to have been more stirred than was the French bourgeoisie by the similar but less desperate War of the Fronde. The fact is, England had for some time been rapidly getting rich. The long ("hundred years") war had beaten down French competition; it was, to a great extent, a trade war, in which we had Van Artevelde's and other Flemish trading folk on our side. Our wool-staplers had made money; and how better could they spend it than for the good of their souls? A wealthy tradesman did not usually found or add to a monastery, as the nobles of two and three centuries before had been so fond of doing. The friars had made the monks unpopular; though, in fact, few monasteries—except those which, like Walsingham, and Canterbury, and Beverley, had famous relics—were ever really popular. The poor liked them because they were fed at their doors; but burgesses and franklins looked on them as, for the most part, country clubs for the aristocracy, where men of gentle birth put up as they travelled from place to place, and where, when they died, they were prayed for quite apart from "the mob" and their mass-priests. A tradesman, therefore, rebuilt or restored his church, taking care, of course, to secure for himself a sufficient number of masses, but also showing herein a certain amount of public spirit. Hence, all through all East Anglia, from Lavenham and Woolpit in Suffolk to the Norfolk "marshland," you find churches of this date, the names of the wool-staplers who built or "restored" them being not seldom preserved. The same in Somerset, a land of wool-stapling and of splendid "perpendicular" towers; and again in "the Devizes," where he heavy "per-

pendicular" roofs are laid on Norman corbels. The feeling went on quite late; that little gem of fan-tracery, the Chapel of the Red Mount, at Lynn, was not built till 1485.

In Bristol, not far from what used to be a street of quaint old house-fronts, Narrow Wine Street, there used to be an old book shop, the plain brick front of which did not prepare you for the fine louver-lighted hall which was behind. I believe the outside has long ago been made to match the inside, and the whole labelled "Canynge's House." And Canynge it was who in one of his mayoralties built St. Mary Redcliffe. He got all his stone from Durdham Down; and in the church you may see a huge bone said to belong to the colossal cow which (as if one of the miracles of the tenth century had been transplanted into the fifteenth) gave milk enough for all his workmen. And from that church Stratford Canning took his title, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. He was Stratford, as being the son of Stratford Canning, the banker, the younger of Prime Minister Canning's two uncles; but he was of Redcliffe, because the Cannings, though settled at Garvagh in County Derry since Elizabeth's time, claimed kindred with the famous Mayor.

The father of the most famous of the Cannings was eldest son to Stratford Canning of Garvagh. He, falling in love with a peasant's daughter, was disinherited, and came to London with only a hundred and fifty pounds a year and what he could make by his pen. He got to be a newspaper hack, was called to the Bar but remained briefless, and published a volume of poems which did not make him famous. In 1768 he met Mary Anne Costello (by her name a countrywoman of his own), and married her, the peasant's daughter being, let us hope, in a better world. But Miss Costello's face was her fortune; and, like other portionless girls, she was probably a bad manager; and in 1771 George died, broken down under life's burden, leaving her with a young son and daughter. She went on the stage, marrying Redditch, an actor, after whose death she married a Plymouth linen-draper named Hunn; and, outliving him, enjoyed for many years the five hundred pounds a year, her son's pension as Under-Secretary, which in 1801 he dutifully arranged to have settled on her and her daughters. This son was, soon after his father's death, adopted by his uncle Stratford, the banker, and by him sent in due time to Eton.

For the banker had thriven, and kept in Clement's Lane a sort of little Holland House, to which (since he was brother of an Irish Viscount) the Whigs, who have always been such thorough aristocrats, could freely resort. Eton was, therefore, the proper place for one who was privileged to enter life in good company; and at Eton young Canning's career justified his uncle's choice. The "Microcosm"—a school magazine got up by him along with Hookham Frere, and the Smiths of "The Rejected Addresses"—is worthy of the Editor of the "Anti-Jacobin." Knight, the publisher, bought the copyright for fifty pounds. Of how many school magazines, even in this day of greater culture, would the copyright bring fifty shillings? At Oxford the brilliant boy kept up his reputation, getting the Chancellor's Latin verse prize, and making friends with Lord Holland, Lord Granville, etc. Entering at Lincoln's Inn, he got into that paradise of fashionable Whigs, Devonshire House, when out burst the French Revolution. At once the Whig dovescotes were in a flutter, and a flight of notabilities—Spencer, Wyndham, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Burke himself—entered the Tory camp. Canning soon followed, frightened by Godwin's proposal that, in case of a revolution, he should head the English Jacobins.

So Canning went straight to Pitt, partly moved by the shabby way in which the Whigs treated Burke and Sheridan, as they afterwards did O'Connell, dozens of them giving up White's because "Big O" was elected to that choicest of Whig clubs.

Under Pitt, Canning made his maiden speech in 1794; and he tells his college friend, Lord Morley, how he felt when he saw some of the members laughing. Two years after he became Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and soon began the "Anti-Jacobin," in which the Liberals were subjected to the railery which had usually fallen to the lot of "the stupid party," as the Tories have so often been called.

Frere wrote in this, and the Smiths, and even Pitt himself. But the only piece of which the popularity has lasted is the "Needy Knife-grinder." Most of us know how the Radical got hold of this man, and told him how oppressed he was, and urged him to make a stand against those who were depriving him of his rights. The knife-grinder listens, and when the orator stops asks for sixpence to drink his honour's

health. Whereupon the champion of the rights of man bursts out with :

I give thee sixpence ! I would see thee hanged first :
Wretch, whom no sense of wrong can rouse to
vengeance,
Poor puling caitiff, reprobate degraded,
Spiritless outcast !

The anti-Jacobins were nothing if not classical—those were the days when a line from Horace or Virgil was essential in a neat speech ; and the metre of the knife-grinder is Sapphic, often tried since, but seldom with such success.

In 1800 Canning married one hundred thousand pounds and Miss Scott. This made him independent of office, and when Pitt, who had carried the Union by promising Roman Catholic Emancipation, resigned to save appearances, Canning resigned too. In 1807 he became Foreign Minister under his wife's sister's husband ; and to him is due the credit, such as it is, of Lord Cathcart's carrying off the Danish fleet, while he charged on Lord Castlereagh's slowness in sending reinforcements the failure of the Walcheren expedition, and of Sir John Moore at Corunna. Hence war to the knife, or rather to the pistol, between the two statesmen. A duel was fought, and at the second fire Lord Castlereagh had a coat button shot away, and Canning got a slight wound in the thigh. This quarrel broke up the Portland Ministry. Perceval came in ; and Canning, refusing to take office, helped him by vigorous speeches in support of the war. He also went in for literature, writing in the "Quarterly" a humorous article on the bullion question (1808), and getting close friends with Scott. "I admire your 'Lady of the Lake'" (said he) "more and more every time I read it ; but what a thousand pities it is that you didn't write it in the grand and heroic couplet of Dryden ! Do you know I've a great mind to clothe some parts of your fine poem in a Drydenic habit." If he did so, he was wise enough not to publish the attempt ; but Scott's "Poacher," a poor imitation of Crabbe, and a few other little-read pieces were, no doubt, due to Canning's suggestion.

When Perceval was shot, Lord Liverpool became Premier, and he wanted Canning to be his Foreign Secretary. But Canning, though he told his friends : "Two years at the Foreign Office just now would be worth ten years of life to me"—refused, because his rival, Castlereagh, was Leader of the House of Commons. So, saying in the grand style of the day : "My political allegiance is buried

in the grave of Pitt," he went abroad, partly for his eldest son's health. He came in during his absence for one of those good things which are the envy of the modern place-hunter. The King of Portugal was coming back from Brazil, and Canning was appointed to welcome him as Ambassador Extraordinary at a salary of fourteen thousand pounds a year ! He got home again in time to help his party to pass the Six Acts, which for a time made Government in England a pure despotism ; but he managed to be out of the way at Queen Caroline's trial, thereby enraging George IV., who, however, when Lord Castlereagh killed himself, was told by the Duke of Wellington that nobody but Canning could fill the vacant Foreign Secretaryship. But it was soon seen that his policy was not quite the same as his predecessor's. The "Holy Alliance" was for crushing all attempts to modify the despotisms which had been everywhere founded after the fall of Napoleon. "No," said Canning, "England can't help at that game. We'll maintain the parcelling out of Europe settled by the Treaty of Vienna, though we don't half like it ; but we hold every nation to be free to do as it likes within its own boundaries, and when we please we will resist any attack on this freedom." This was in 1822. Two years before, Portugal and Naples had gone in for Constitutional Government ; but Neapolitan freedom was at once crushed down by Austria, without a word of protest from England. From Portugal the Constitutional movement spread to Spain ; and in 1823 the French crossed the frontier and put down the Spanish Liberals, England again declining to interfere, but taking the rather dishonourable course of abetting the Spanish colonies in their revolt, "calling," as Canning grandiloquently expressed it, "the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." Perhaps more "buncombe" was talked about this, and more self-glorification indulged in, than about anything that has happened since the end of the long war. The fact is, it was a very poor business. The Spanish American States have not done much, while their loss weakened Spain ; and the result was that ever since, the Spaniards have hated us, and all the blood and treasure spent in the Peninsular War were thrown away, as far as securing their affection is concerned.

In Portugal, by the way, we did just the same that we had bitterly condemned the

French for doing in Spain—that is, we interfered with an armed force which drove out the absolutist, Don Miguel; only, as Brazil was quite tranquil, the French could not repay us in kind by helping that Portuguese colony to independence.

Three years after, Canning went to Paris, and made thorough friends with Charles the Tenth. "What a pity it is we two nations did not understand one another!" said the King. "Had we done so, my brother Louis's army would never have crossed into Spain." Canning was asked to the Royal "dinner in public," that survival of mediæval customs, to which no one not of Royal blood had ever been invited, except the Duke of Wellington and Prince Metternich.

The shadow of death was on Canning when the Great Powers began to intervene in the Greek insurrectionary war. This probably accounts for the strange clause about the forced armistice which, by leading to the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, gave Russia a predominance that Canning would have been the last to accord to her. His maxim was: "We must on no account go to war with Turkey to force her to acknowledge the independence of Greece;" at the same time he acquiesced in the secret Article which empowered the allied fleets to insist on an armistice by force of arms. This proves weakness; and we are not astonished that four weeks after signing such an unsatisfactory treaty Canning died. He had caught a shocking cold at the Duke of York's funeral. It was bitter January weather, and the "Cabinet" was kept for two hours standing on the cold stones in St. George's Chapel before the Royal mourners were ready. "Stand on your cocked hat," whispered Canning to Lord Eldon, who complained that he had lost all feeling in his feet. Unhappily he neglected to stand on his own hat. Perhaps he did not like to spoil it, for Canning had that penny-wisdom which, like a strange vein, crosses the minds of many great men. Here's an instance of it. He lived at Brompton; and when the House was sitting he used to stop his coach just west of Hyde Park Corner. Thence he would walk down Constitution Hill, bidding the coachman meet him at the same place—to save the turn-pike. Anyhow, he saved his hat and lost his life, for the cold got hold of him; and the cruel badgering he suffered all the session—Lord Grey making such a savage attack on him in the Lords that he seriously

thought of taking a peerage in order to answer him face to face prevented his rallying. He tried Bath and Brighton, but in vain. The effort to hold together his patchwork Ministry—for Peel and Wellington would not serve under him—was too much for him. That he should have been made Premier at all by such a Tory as George the Fourth is strange.

So Canning died—a strange mixture; Liberal abroad, strictly Conservative abroad; his own explanation of the anomaly being, that in each case he took the weaker side—and with him died the grandiose style of oratory, though Lord Beaconsfield afterwards did a good deal to bring it to life again.

His first cousin, Stratford, was the banker's youngest son. The banker had shared his brother's fate—was disinherited because of a mésalliance. But the marriage turned out a success; for the wit and beauty of Mehetabel Patrick helped to make the banker's house a favourite supper-place for Fox and Sheridan and other big Whigs. This was invaluable to both the cousins; it probably led to their being sent to Eton, and there it gave them a start with the friendship of all the young celebrities. Stratford, sixteen years younger than his cousin, seems to have run about pretty much as he liked at Windsor. To Eton boys George the Third was a deal more accessible than his granddaughter is even to Ambassadors. There Stratford Canning met Addington and Pitt, and the rest of the Tory set, who won him over by taking him to hear the debates. He became Captain of Eton, and therefore went to King's, Cambridge, living in Walpole's old rooms, and not troubling himself about reading. Before he had finished residence his cousin, who throughout life helped him in all sorts of ways, sent him as secretary with the embassy which tried to persuade the Danes that seizing their fleet was a real act of kindness to them; and he got his degree by decree of the Cambridge senate, by virtue of "absence on the King's service." Had he not been away he would not have had to go through an examination; King's College at that time, and long after, kept itself independent of the University, and its rules. Next year (1808) he was sent with Mr. Adair to Constantinople to try to make peace between Russia and Turkey, so that the Russian army on the Danube might be free to take the French in flank.

Adair was so disgusted with the delays, and shuffles, and double-shuffles, and plots, and counterplots of Turkish diplomacy, that he got himself transferred to Vienna; and young Canning was left alone, "entirely forgotten by the Government; 'steering by the stars;' the most important despatch Marquis Wellesley sent me, relating not to our policy but to some classical MSS., supposed to be somewhere in the Seraglio." He had the French and Austrian Ambassadors countermining him; he had to deal with the incurable Micawberish procrastination of the Turks; and it was only by taking on himself to order Captain Hope to bring up the Mediterranean fleet to prevent French privateers from selling their prizes in Turkish ports that he forced the Sultan to be in earnest. This gave the Turks a taste of his mettle, and earned for him the title of the great Eltchi (Ambassador), which clung to him through life. So what between showing a bold front and a grand manner, and resolutely determining not to be made a fool of, and also crying up Wellington's victories in Spain, thereby proving that England and not France was the stronger power, he at last succeeded in getting the Treaty of Bucharest signed, (May, 1812), just in the nick of time to enable Tschitchakoff and his army to march upon Napoleon, thus doing (as Wellington said, in the bombastic style of the day), "the most important service to this country and to the world that ever fell to the lot of any individual to perform."

Sick of "honourable exile" at the Porte (he always hankered after a high ministerial appointment at home), he then came away, his work for the time being done, and went to Paris with the Allied Sovereigns, and saw, for the only time, the handsome young Nicholas, destined to be his life-long enemy. He next had a very difficult bit of diplomacy—to settle the rivalries of the Swiss Cantons and weld them into a "neutral and guaranteed" State. And then he was sent to Washington, where things were in such a ticklish state, that cross-grained Secretary Adams said to him: "Sir, it took us of late several years to go to war with you for the redress of our grievances; renew these subjects of complaint, and it won't take so many weeks to produce the same effect."

The chief grievance was the right of search for British seamen, and our way of suppressing the slave trade. Canning managed to smooth things over; but he did

not like America and the Americans; and in 1824 he went again to Turkey, and tried hard to do his best for the Turks in their war with Greece. The Greeks, who were at the last gasp, would gladly have accepted half independence and Turkish garrisons in their fortresses, but Turkey was so blindly stubborn that she forced on Navarino, and threw the whole game into Russia's hands.

Then Stratford Canning had a long rest, and got into Parliament, where he made but a poor figure. In 1832 he was sent on a fool's errand to Portugal to try to make friends between Dons Pedro and Miguel. Then they sent him to St. Petersburg, but Nicholas would not receive him, and Lord Palmerston would not send any one instead, and for years we had no Ambassador at the Czar's Court. At last, in 1841, he went to Constantinople, and for the next sixteen years (with only one break, during which at home he was made Viscount), he worked hard to save Turkey, insisting on reforms, taking away all real ground of complaint from Russia by getting the Turks to give way about the Holy Places, and securing (by the Hatti-Sheriff of Gulhané) the persons and properties of all Turkish subjects without distinction of religion. He found time, too, to get leave for Layard (to whom he supplied the money) to carry on his diggings at Nineveh, thereby checkmating the French, whose Consul, Botta, had already begun unearthing the famous sculptures.

But Russia had made up her mind to fight; Prince Mentchikoff was furious at having been out-manceuvred by the Englishman, and he made his master as mad as himself; and the Czar demanded, as his ultimatum, the suzerainty over the thirteen million Christian subjects of the Porte. Of course, this could not be conceded, and the Russian armies were ordered across the Pruth.

The desire to crush an Ambassador who had so long bearded him and thwarted his agents, went for a great deal in the Czar's mad decision.

After the war, during which Stratford Canning used all his efforts to bring in Austria and Prussia—for nothing was more hateful to him than our alliance with "that adventurer, Louis Bonaparte"—he settled in England, still hoping for office, but getting instead the Garter, an Oxford D.C.L., and a Cambridge LL.D. The bad ways that the Turks got into when his pupil,

Abd-el-Mejid, was succeeded by the recklessly extravagant Abd-el-Aziz, clouded his latter days; it was heart-breaking to see the people for whom he had worked so hard and so long, going backward instead of keeping along the line of wholesome reform on which he had set them. Still he lived to be ninety-four, writing poetry and religious essays up to the very last, outliving by eighteen years his first cousin's only surviving son, the Indian Governor-General. Those are the three whose statues stand close together in the Abbey. There is no other famous name in the family. They shone like a constellation of meteors; and now all that is left is the Garvagh-Cannings, of Derry, whose ancestor made the right marriage, and remained (as his posterity have done) in the obscurity of a small Irish Lord.

Of "Clemency Canning," the Indian Governor, not many words need be said; his title reminds us how differently he was estimated by different parties. Born in 1812, he, too, was an Eton boy, and was at Christ Church, Oxford, with Gladstone. In 1837 he succeeded to the title which, after the great statesman's death, had been conferred on his mother. After a number of minor appointments (for his father's son was pretty sure of office), Lord Aberdeen made him Postmaster-General in 1853; and two years later Lord Palmerston sent him to India to succeed Lord Dalhousie.

Soon began the muttered thunder which heralded the Mutiny. The Sepoys cried out against sea service; they had enlisted to fight on land, and could not lose caste by being sent to Burmah across the "black water." But Canning was firm, and when it came to the point, the Sepoys went, nursing their wrath till by-and-by. Then came on the greased cartridges, followed by the outbreak, "due," (says Sir John Kaye) "to our being too English; and," he adds, "it was only because we were English, that when it arose it did not utterly overwhelm us."

Canning was blamed for not realising at the outset that it was a struggle for existence. For a long time he would not let the Calcutta English form a Volunteer regiment. In restricting the liberty of the press, he included the English as well as the Native newspapers; and no one can be astonished at his so doing who remembers how, even at home, the press lost its head. He disarmed civilian English as well as Natives; and no wonder,

when "Pandy-potting" had become a general amusement, and when even soldiers of the line, as soon as they stepped off their ship, would fix bayonets and begin to hunt down "niggers" in the Calcutta streets. The fact is, it was a panic, and fear is always cruel; and Canning had the nerve to do all he could to keep Englishmen from behaving worse than tigers. Where energy was the thing, he was energetic enough. When Sir H. Lawrence asked for full powers in Oudh, he at once granted them (he had long before made Lawrence Chief Commissioner there, in lieu of the incapable who had let things fall into confusion). He held out against John Lawrence, who was for giving up all the country beyond the Indus; and, by-and-by, he, with more questionable right, stood out against Outram, who wanted to draw distinctions between the rebel and non-rebel talookdars, and sternly insisted that "all the land of Oudh was confiscate to the British Government."

Cold and reserved, and slow in making up his mind, he was never a popular Governor; but the Natives felt that he was just; and the assurance he gave them that the annexation policy should be abandoned, and that adoption should be sanctioned as a right, did much to restore quiet. In that terrible time, men like Lord Clyde were deeply impressed by his calm courage and firmness, and by the thorough trust he reposed in subordinates of proved ability. He was magnanimous, too (a very rare quality), and never attempted, all through the storm of obloquy that beat on him, to right himself by blaming his countrymen. When we think how one little blunder might have lost us our Empire, we may well be thankful we had such a Governor. He was worthy of his father and his cousin.

CARD GAMES.

Not quite forgotten by a generation accustomed to hear itself called rising, now fairly risen, and perhaps alas! even on the decline, is the Pope Joan board, a cheerful family altar, about which burnt the candles, moulds or sperm as the case might be, but always attended by the useful snuffers, when on the long winter evenings young and old, but chiefly young, gathered about the table round. A breathless interest hung about the game; for on some of the chances the stakes often accumulated to high figures: there might be

sixpences even in the compartment of the board so long uncleared; fourpenny pieces lurking among the shoals of fish, those charming mother-of-pearl fish, such stores of which were in the hands of the careful housekeepers of long ago. There was Matrimony, always popular, the winning of which caused such delightful confusion to the ingenuous maid of the period; there was Intrigue, that unhallowed flirtation between Queen and Knave; and the Pope herself, the nine of diamonds, otherwise known as the "Curse of Scotland;" and you may be sure that the well-informed person of the period had something to say about the battle of Culloden and the Duke of Cumberland.

Pope Joan has survived to the present day in the modified form of "Newmarket," and a family connection, known as Matrimony, was in existence for some time, till superseded by the foreign importation of Besique. And Besique had long flourished as a local and provincial game of the Sologne before it was taken up in Paris and then spread throughout the world. But when we turn the other way and enquire into ancestry of this and other card games, we are upon a track where the lights are few and the indications doubtful. As to Pope Joan herself, apart from the conditions that attach to her, she was familiar to the early German card-makers, who relished her as a kind of slur upon the Papacy. "A satiric figure, for which the author had his head cut off," is the description of her ladyship in a pack of cards of the seventeenth century. And to its double testimony against Pope and Pretender, possibly Pope Joan, as a game, owes its early popularity.

But, in its origin, "Pope" had nothing to do with such burning questions. It was originally "Le Poque," a patois for poche, or pocket, alluding to the receptacle for the stakes, and came to us from France, probably with the Protestant refugees. But Poque itself is only a modification of the more ancient game of Hoc. The Hocs were the four Kings, the Queen of Spades, and the Knave of Diamonds, each of which when played was entitled to a stake. Hoc was the favourite game of Cardinal Mazarin, which he introduced from Italy. Possibly Pope and Cardinals played the game at the Vatican; and this was the game that Mazarin played in his last moments, as is related in contemporaneous memoirs. "The Commander of Souvré held his cards; he made a fine coup, and eagerly told His

Eminence, thinking to give him pleasure. 'Commander,' replied he with fine composure, 'I lose more here on my bed, than you can win for me at the card table.'" Presently the Pope's Nuncio arrived with the final absolution, and cards were put away with a last sigh of regret.

Other card games will be found with even more ancient pedigrees, although generally beginning in French sources. But Primero, which is one of the first to appear in our literature, is the only card game mentioned by Shakespeare, who describes Henry the Eighth as "left at Primero," while Falstaff remorsefully owns to having forsworn himself at Primero. This Primero seems to have a Spanish origin, and was probably introduced to the English Court in the suite of Catherine of Arragon. The game was played with four cards in each hand. The prime, from which the game takes its name, is to have the four cards of different suits; the flush also counts, or the four cards of the same suit, and there is also the point or the numbers of the cards reckoned according to an artificial scale. But the great feature of Primero is the vyeing, where the bold player may raise the stakes almost ad libitum, and the other must either cover the increased stake or forfeit his original deposit. Hence, Primero is the ancestor of such gambling games as Post and Pair, once a favourite game in the West of England; of the almost forgotten Brag, once so popular that the great Mr. Hoyle wrote a treatise on the game: and last, though not least, the famous American game of Poker, if that can be called a game which is only an instrument for enormous and indefinite gambling.

A much finer description of game is Piquet, which has held its ground for three centuries at least. It was known in England as Cent or Sant, from the score, which usually ran up to a hundred. An English variety was Gleek, which was played with twelve cards like Piquet, but by three players instead of two. In Piquet the smaller cards are thrown out of the pack, the twos, threes, fours, and fives—as in Molière's time, whose game of Piquet in *Les Facheux* will be familiar to all lovers of the game—and at a later period the sixes. And to this rearrangement of the packs we may attribute the promotion of the ace to be the head of the suit, in all games that derive from this source. With an increase in the number of players more cards are required, and hence at Gleek the

deuces and treys only are thrown out, while the talon or stock, the remainder after each player has received his twelve cards, is still eight cards, as at Piquet.

Now the man who first insisted on making a fourth in the game, is deserving of all honour as the practical originator of Whist. It might have been at the drum-head during some tedious siege in the Civil Wars; it might have been by the Christmas fire; anyhow, there was the fourth man, and to bring him in with his twelve cards, the pack remaining inelastic, either the whole fifty-two cards of the pack must be played, and the stock or remainder left at four, or the stock must be given up altogether and the treys taken in. Either alternative was adopted, and the result was the two games known as Ruff and Honours (alias Slamm), and Whist.

This will be seen from the description of the two games in the "Compleat Gamester" of 1674, compiled by W. Cotton, the friend of Izaak Walton, who had already had a hand in the "Compleat Angler."

"At Ruff and Honours," writes our author, "four players have twelve apiece, four are left in the stock, the uppermost is turned up, and that is trumps. He that hath the ace (of trumps) ruffs, that is, he takes in the four cards and lays out four others. They score honours two and four. They say honours are split. If either side are at eight groats he hath the benefit of calling 'can ye,' if he has two honours, and if the other answer 'one,' the game is up, which is nine in all."

"At Whist they put out the deuces and take in no stock; and it is called Whist from the silence that is to be observed in the play."

These modifications, it must be said, had entirely changed the character of the game. The "show" of Piquet, the point, the sequence, the four or three aces, etc., had been abandoned as inappropriate to the wider game, and only the play of Piquet had been retained with the vital addition of trumps.

The original idea of trumps as a suit overpowering and mastering all others, is to be found in the very infancy of card-playing. The old Tarot packs had a suit of pictured cards of greater dignity and authority than the rest. These represent "les grands," a house of hereditary trumps, in fact, with their veto on the ~~deuces~~ of the rest of the pack. And this notion,

modified in a democratic sense, by according predominance to each common suit in turn as chance may determine, transmitted in popular games of which we have now no account, rendered possible the modern game of Whist, with its almost infinite inductions and combinations.

The etymology of the name Whist, as given by Cotton, has hardly been superseded by modern criticism, and its probability seems greater when it is considered how great a contrast the game is in that respect to its worthy predecessors. For Piquet is evidently a chatty, conversational game. It seems to suggest a polished salon, diamond rings, snuff-boxes, the powdered peruke, and delicate hands enclosed in laced ruffles. From the Piquet table rises continually a gentle murmur of modish voices. "My point is so-and-so, Madame la Comtesse." "Ah, but it is not good, Monsieur le Baron." "I have the honour to hold tierce from King," and so on; while, as play goes on, the score is called continually, and questions asked from time to time. Contrast all this with the rigour and silence of Whist, and it seems natural enough that the Mrs. Harris of the period, called upon to give it a name, should reply "Whist."

The silence of Whist, it was felt by professional players, might be improved by judicious manœuvring. "He that can by craft overlook his adversaries' game," writes Cotton, "would much advantage thereby;" and our author describes a system of signalling which contrasts forcibly with modern refinements of the kind.

"By the wink of one eye, or putting one finger on the nose or table," writes Cotton, "it signifies one honour, shutting both eyes two," with other refinements as charmingly simple and ingenious.

The games of Ruff and Whist had already, in 1674, attained such popularity in England "that every child almost of eighteen years old hath a competent knowledge of that recreation." But Whist had not become a fashionable game. It ranked with Cribbage, of which a later writer says, "It is too vulgar to be mentioned; well suited to the lower class of people by teaching them how to reckon." Indeed, some time elapsed before the game had cast off the trammels of its ancestry. When the full pack was played—when thirteenth cards and odd tricks first came to light, and the game assumed its present form—then the intrinsic merit of the game brought it into notice, and, from Bagnigge

Wells to Bath, it became the delight of every fashionable coterie. It was in 1743 that Hoyle published his first treatise on Whist, and advertised himself as ready to give private lessons in the niceties of play. Ten years after the professor of Whist is satirised in an anonymous *jeu d'esprit* entitled "The Polish Gamester, or the Humours of Whist," where Lord Finesse and Sir George Tenace are "lavishly beat by a couple of 'prentices," in spite of the maxims of Mr. Hoyle and their mathematical calculations on the chances of the game. But Whist is allowed to be thoroughly English in tone.

"As long as Quadrille and Ombre were the games in vogue, we certainly were certainly under French influence, whereas now Whist is come into fashion, our politics are improved upon us."

Quadrille and Ombre, however, were long after held in favour in the provinces. Indeed, Ombre, which is probably the original game, Quadrille being an adaptation for four places, many consider to be the finest game extant for three players. But Ombre and Quadrille are terribly complicated for a beginner, by the conventional value attached to the cards. Still all those difficulties, and the associations connected with the games, give them a certain distinction, and it is quite possible that fashion may one day revive them.

Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights
At Ombre, singly to decide their doom.

An early game, with some affinities to Whist—descended indeed from the same ancestor, M. Piquet—Trump, is Triomphe or French Ruff, and this game, carried across the Atlantic, perhaps, by English Cavaliers settling in Virginia, has given birth to Euchre, which is still played in some of the Southern States, where Poker is considered as only fit for cowboys and horse-stealers. And Euchre, finding its way back to Paris, was simplified and brightened up into Napoleon—which has gradually established itself in England as one of the most popular of round games. Triomphe again has a direct descendant in *Ecarté*, which might be described as five-card two-handed whist, without the honours, but with a faint reminiscence of its original Piquet, in marking the King.

Hitherto there has been question only of legitimate card games, in which skill, memory, and logical induction play their part with blind chance. We may now turn to those simply gambling games, in

which the result might be as well attained by spinning a coin, casting dice, or pulling two straws out of a haystack. The most ancient of these games is Faro or Pharaoh, of which the once popular Basset is only a variation. Already we have come across Cardinal Mazarin, and now it is to his niece that we are indebted for that Basset which was so fashionable during the latter years of the seventeenth century.

When Hortense de Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin, who had inherited the enormous fortune of her uncle the Cardinal, found her husband so insupportable that she abandoned fortune, and everything, rather than live with him; after staying several years in Italy, she was urged to repair to London in order to combat the influence of Mademoiselle de Querouailles, then Duchess of Portsmouth. Hortense had been greatly admired by King Charles the Second in his exile; he had even proposed marriage, but the Cardinal not thinking much of his prospects, had declined the honour. All this had happened a good many years ago, but Hortense was still charming, and the old spell might still have force. Thus it happened, indeed, and the French interest and Milady Portsmouth bade fair to be checkmated. But, unluckily, the volatile Hortense fell in love with somebody else, in spite of the remonstrances of staid and prudent friends. And thus the plot broke down; but the attempt was enough for the Grand Monarque, and from that time not a sou could she get of her French rentes, which were all under the control of an unforgiving husband. Thus she had nothing to depend upon but a pension of some four thousand a year from King Charles, which was not always forthcoming, and to meet her expenses she entered into a sort of partnership with one Morin, a professional gambler, who introduced Basset, then fashionable in Paris, and kept his bank at Madame de Mazarin's house.

Under such auspices the game soon became the rage, and it remained in vogue nearly half a century, spreading to all parts of the country, and giving great employment to the card-makers, for each player required a pack of thirteen cards on which to mark the game, while the banker at the end of a long night's play would be almost up to his knees in used cards. "The new turn of taste in favour of Whist," no doubt caused Basset to fall into oblivion. And then, as gambling houses took the place of private salons, games of a nature

more profitable to the bankers came to the front. E.O. tables, roulette, rouge et noir, became the instruments of professional gamblers and sharpers. It is only of late years that there has been a recrudescence of private gambling in the numerous proprietary and other clubs, which in many cases have no other object than play. And now Baccarat is the favourite gambling game, about which its admirers say that it is the fairest game played, and gives no advantage to the banker, unless he cheats.

THE SHEPHERD OF THE SALT LAKE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

HE was known to have been a convict, and to have served out his time at Macquarie Harbour, though in his old age there was little or nothing in his manner or appearance to indicate anything of savagery or vice in his disposition.

Twenty years of his life had been spent in profitless labour with pick, and shovel, and cradle, on the diggings that broke out in endless numbers throughout the length and breadth of Australia, after the gold discoveries of 1851. During the "fifties" he was in Victoria; first at Bendigo, then at Ballarat, Melbourne, Maldon, the Ovens, and other places of promise. The "sixties" found him in New South Wales, still leading the nomadic life of a digger. The "seventies" saw him shepherd, stockman, station-cook, timber-feller, and hut-keeper; and in 1880—an old broken-down man—he was shepherding sheep in Queensland.

No life could have been more forlorn and desolate than his during those latter days of his travelling. His hut was distant some twenty miles from the primitive head-station on which his employer lived. From week end to week end he saw no living soul except the black boy who brought him his rations, and, at rare intervals, the sheep overseer or manager, who rode out to count his flock.

His solitary bark hut was erected on the edge of the basin of a dried-up salt lake, such as are found frequently in the interior of Australia. It was nothing but a depressed hollow, treeless and grassless, covered with a salty incrustation, and at the edges with a sparse growth of creeping pig-weed and dwarf ti-tree. There was something unutterably melancholy in this

vast expanse, gleaming with a dirty-white lustre under the sun's rays—silent, lifeless, and desolate. It was the home of no living thing; even its scanty covering of vegetation only extended its straggling growth along the edges, choked back by the salty, dust-like soil. The very birds seemed to avoid it and fly in other directions; the chirp of the crickets and grasshoppers, sounding incessantly from the grass all about, never broke the mournful stillness that brooded over the Salt Lake. It might have been blighted by some awful curse, so lifeless, so lugubrious a thing was it. It lay in the heart of mulga ridges, rising in gentle slopes all around, green where covered with grass, dirty-red where the friable earth lay unhidden. Towards the spot where the old shepherd's hut was erected, a low outcrop of rock formed the northern boundary of the lake; behind this was a clump of gidgee-trees, and, stretching back from it, a wilderness of wattle and wild-hop vines.

In this melancholy retreat old Scotty passed many a long and weary year. So isolated was it, and so deeply did his nature become imbued with the callousness of his surroundings, that time passed over his head almost unheeded. The days brought nothing to him but the dull routine of his duties; the weeks fled; the months slipped by; and he neither noticed nor cared to mark their flight. His dog and his quiet flock were his only companions. He had no thought for anything else; they made the sum total of his existence. He almost knew every individual sheep by sight, and they in return exhibited no fear of him, so accustomed were they to his voice and presence. Every morning, when he let them out of the "yards," they would slowly wander across the ridges, feeding as they went; every evening they would as slowly make their way back again, without effort or direction on his part.

The months came and went, and brought no change in the lonely life of the old shepherd. The stony, grass-covered slopes of the mulga ridges surrounded him, cutting him off from the outer world by a motionless billowy sea of green; the Salt Lake, gleaming with saline incrustations, was ever before his gaze, benumbing his mind with the mystery of its lifeless solemnity.

One evening, at the close of a long summer day, when the wattle-blossom and the wild hops made the languorous air heavy with their subtle perfume, three

horsemen suddenly appeared before the lonely shepherd. It was the owner of the station, accompanied by two bush-hands.

"Good-day, Scotty; sheep all right?" said the former, reining up and dismounting.

"Aye, boss."

"That's right. We'll camp here to-night, and I'll go and have a look at them. I'm going to start fencing in this end of the run. We've come to mark out the line. I suppose the gibbera hole's full?"

"Aye, pretty well."

"Then we'll take the horses down and give them a drink."

The four men, leading the horses by the bridles, walked to where the outcrop of white limestone rock formed a natural barrier to the Salt Lake. A broad sheep-track led down to a narrow gully, that split the rock almost at its centre. Hidden in this ambush, and overhung by an immense block of limestone, was a small, dark-looking pool not more than three to four feet in width. Some troughing, rudely constructed from the hollowed-out trunks of trees, lay on the ground near by. The horses drank from the troughs, whilst the men dipped their pannikins in the pool.

"The water's cold as ice," said Scotty's master. "It makes your teeth tingle."

"It's always the same," answered the shepherd, "even on the hottest day."

"It's a regular god-send, this gibbera hole," said the squatter. "The only water for ten miles round. It must be a spring. It doesn't seem to go down at all."

"No, it never alters."

"I wonder if it's deep," said one of the men.

"Deep? It is so," answered Scotty. "I cut a sapling twenty feet long, but I couldn't bottom with it."

Their thirst satisfied, the men made their way along the gully out on to the small plateau of rock that commanded the Salt Lake. The vast expanse stretched away before their eyes desolate and lifeless, and the three visitors gazed at it for a long time in silence.

"It's a strange place," said the squatter at length, speaking softly, as though loth to break the curious stillness. "It's enough to give one the horrors."

"Horrors!" exclaimed Scotty, with sudden vehemence, "you're right. It do give the horrors. It's always the same summer and winter, weighing down and crushing the heart out of a man. It's a drefful place. There's a curse hanging to

it, and those who live nigh it get the curse in them too. I know it. Night and day for four years I've been watching it, and it's blighted me the same as it is itself. There's no livin' thing goes near it but me and the sheep. It's only me knows what a cursed thing it is."

The squatter and his men exchanged a quick look of surprise. The old shepherd's manner had suddenly changed. He had been dull, impassive, and silent. Their unexpected arrival had aroused in him no surprise, had given rise to no sign of welcome or pleasure. But when he spoke of the Salt Lake, his manner was wholly changed. His sunken eyes gleamed with excitement, his voice was raised, his hands and arms moved restlessly.

"I know it," he continued, with still greater vehemence, pointing towards the lake with shaking finger. "I've watched it for days and days together, feeling it weighing me down more and more. This is what it's done." He motioned with one comprehensive gesture towards his furrowed face, his sunken eyes, and trembling limbs. "It's broke me down. It's made me like this. It's blighted me the same as it blights everything that goes near it. There's no escaping from it when once it's got hold of you. It'll be the death of me in the end. There's no getting away from it now—not for me."

His arm sank to his side, the light died away from his eyes, and he relapsed into silence, standing there gazing vacantly at the funereal waste.

His three companions exchanged a second look of meaning, and one of the men whispered to his mate, "He's clean off his head."

"Oh, it's not so bad as that, Scotty," said the squatter soothingly. "It's a dull place to live in, and it's terribly lonely, too. If you like, I'll move you to another part of the run."

But the old shepherd shook his head.

"No," he answered listlessly, "I'm not wanting to go away. I've been here for four years, and I'll leave my bones here. I can't get away from it. It's got hold of me body and soul, and I'll stand by it till it finishes me. I don't want to go away."

"There seems to be a bit of feed on it," continued the other, anxious to change the current of the old man's thoughts.

"Aye," he answered dully. "The sheep's fond of the pig-weed, and I let 'em run along the edge sometimes. But it ain't over safe in the middle."

"How?"

"In summer it's all fine sand and drift; but in winter after the rain it's nothing but a bog."

"It's a fearful place altogether," said the other with a slight shudder. "But let's get back and hobble the horses out."

The three visitors spread their blankets under the shelter of old Scotty's hut that night, and on the next day set themselves to the duty of driving in pegs and blazing the trees along the projected line of fencing. A compass placed on a stake driven into the ground was the sole instrument used; by its aid the long line, running due east and west, was roughly marked out with sufficient accuracy for the purpose of guiding the fencers in their subsequent work. For three days the marking out of the line was continued, and for three nights the workers camped with the old man; then they both took their departure, and the solitary shepherd of the Salt Lake was left once again to his wonted isolation.

But the visit of the squatter and his men was but the herald of a greater change. A month passed, and the old shepherd, pursuing his weary round of duties, had wholly forgotten the circumstance when on returning with his flock one day towards sundown, the white gleam of a tent close by his hut caught his eye. So broken was he by his long enforced solitude, so apathetic, so insensible to every outward influence, that even that unusual sight failed to arouse in him the slightest interest. He followed his sheep towards the brushwood yards, and it was not until two men, emerging from the tent, accosted him, that he seemed to be alive to the fact of there being intruders on his solitude.

"Good evening, mate," said one of the new-comers.

"Good evening," Scotty answered.

"We've come here on that job of fencing," continued the man, seeing that the other asked no questions.

"Have you?"

"Aye. Me and Larry here have taken the contract for it. I've got the missus inside and a youngster. We camped here for the water. We found the sheep tracks goin' down to the spring."

"Yes," answered Scotty. "You'll get plenty of water at the gibbera hole."

He did not speak as though he resented the intrusion of the fencers, only as though he were wholly indifferent to it. His dog, however, used so long to his master's company only, barked furiously at the strangers.

"Lie down, Jerry," said the old man listlessly, and then stood silently regarding the two men.

"It's pretty lonely here," observed the one referred to as Larry. "That's a rum-looking place, that there swamp."

"Aye; it's got a curse on it."

Both the fencers looked curiously at the old man, but he offered no further explanation.

"How d'ye mean?" asked one of them at length.

"There ain't no livin' thing on it. It's got a curse on it."

The men looked at one another meaningly, and then again at the old man. They forbore to make any further allusion to the Salt Lake however, and the one who had spoken first, whom the other addressed as Duke, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, said:

"Well, I expect we'll be camped here some time, seein' that this is the only water for ten miles round. I hope we'll hit it right. We won't interfere with the sheep further than getting one now and again for rations. Them were the arrangements with the boss. We'll kill to-night, if you'll put us on to a good fat 'un."

"All right," answered Scotty slowly. "Take what one you've a mind to."

He watched the men whilst they clambered over the hurdle-gates of the yard, and secured one of the sheep. Then, when they had carried it away to kill, he retired to his hut to prepare his poor evening meal. Entering, he seated himself on the edge of the bunk, gazing through the open doorway at the Salt Lake, visible in all its hideous desolation. Then he rose, and proceeded to busy himself in a dull, spiritless way with the wood ashes on the hearth. He fanned the still-smouldering embers into a flame, and, filling a billy with water, put it on to boil. That done, he reseated himself on the bunk, and gazed out once again at the desolate landscape spread out in front of him. He sat there for some time, silent and meditative, when a slight noise caused him to lower his gaze.

A little girl was peeping through the open doorway. Scotty looked at her without speaking, and the child returned his gaze with grave scrutiny. At last, emboldened by his silence, she stepped into the hut, and going up to him, laid her hand fearlessly on his.

"What's your name?" she asked.

Scotty recovered himself with a start at the sound of her voice. The dreary ex-

panse of the Salt Lake was before his eyes, the thought of it in his mind, and the little figure, coming before him so suddenly, seemed in some way to have a mysterious connection with it.

He gazed at her with a sudden, newly-awakened interest. She was a thin, delicate-looking child, with a pale, clear complexion, and a pair of deep, large dark brown eyes. She was dressed in a dirty white frock, and her legs and feet were bare.

"What's your name?" she asked again, after a pause of silent observation.

"Scotty."

"My name's Lizzie—Lizzie Duke. I'm nearly six. Do you think that's being quite old?"

"Yes," he answered mechanically.

"So do I. Mother don't, nor father. But I do. I want to be old."

"Do you?" he said in the same way.

"Yes. Of course. I don't get any girls and boys to play with, so I want to be old—like mother. Have you seen mother?"

"No."

"She's here, you know, with father and Larry. They've come to do the fencing, and I'm going to help them. Do you live here?" she continued, looking round.

"Yes."

"It's a nice place, but I like a tent better. Don't you? There's so much room in a big tent."

Her eyes wandered slowly round the humble dwelling-place. It was poor enough, the whole structure being of bark and wood. The framework of saplings was visible from inside; the sheets of bark that did for walls and roof being fastened on the outside. The floor was simply the earth beaten hard, the open fireplace a protection of bark and clay. A rude table, made out of roughly-adzed slabs, stood against one wall; opposite it was the bunk on which the old man was seated. A block of wood near the fireplace was the only substitute for chair or form, whilst over the bed was fastened a shelf, on which lay a few tattered volumes, a couple of tin pannikins, and a few odds and ends. Hanging from the roof was a clean flour-bag, tied tightly at the neck. It contained the shepherd's rations of tea, flour, and sugar, and was placed there for protection from the ants. The hut was miserable enough, and hideous in the dingy brown of bark and wood and earthen floor, the only gleam of colour being in the blue blankets that covered the bunk.

"I think I like a tent better," repeated the child, gazing at old Scotty gravely. "It's lighter, and there's more room. Don't you think so?"

But the old man did not seem to hear the question. He was gazing out through the open doorway on the darkening face of the Salt Lake. Almost wholly hidden by the crepuscular shadows, its saline incrustations still dully gleaming, it looked more grotesque, more solemn than in the daylight.

"What is that?" said the child, following his glance.

"It's the Salt Lake."

"What a funny place! It's all flat, and there aren't any trees on it. Why is it like that?"

"Because there's a blight on it that destroys everything that goes near it," he answered, almost unconscious of whom he was addressing.

"A blight? What's that?"

"A curse, that withers and chokes and sucks the life out of every living thing."

The child uttered a cry of fear.

"Oh, it's wicked to say that," she cried, "and I'm getting frightened. Why do you say such naughty things? They can't be true."

"Aye, but it's true enough," he answered, wagging his head solemnly. "It's done it to me, and, if you stop here, it'll be the same with you."

"No, it won't" she answered, breaking out into a fit of childish weeping, "and you're a bad man to frighten me so. I shall tell mother."

The old shepherd gazed at her in surprise. Tears were so new to him, that the sight of them made him actually tremble. He was moved with a strange agitation. For the first time during all those years of loneliness, a feeling of pity and tenderness thrilled him. A curious trembling took hold of him as he laid his hand tenderly on the girl's head and drew her to him, and in his own eyes glistened a moisture that the long, callous years had not seen before.

A weeping child had reopened the springs of human sympathy so long dried up.

Then half-an-hour later the mother came to look for her little daughter. She found the child in the old shepherd's hut. The billy had boiled itself out, the fire was low, the place was dark; but, seated motionless on the bunk, was old Scotty, with little Lizzie sound asleep in his arms.

NEW
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FEBRUARY

VOL.
40

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM
YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round
a
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

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CONTENTS OF PART 219.

No. 940.	
Gretchen. Book I. Chapters IV., V.	40
Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Aberdeen and Banff	54
Going. A Poem	60
The Cannings	60
Card Games	65
The Shepherd of the Salt Lake. A Story in Three Chapters. Chapter I.	69
No. 950.	
Gretchen. Book I. Chapters VI., VII.	73
Festal Cakes	79
A Run to Sandringham	82
Parvula. A Poem	85
Saint Valentine's Day	85
How Canaries came to Saint Andreasberg	90
The Shepherd of the Salt Lake. A Story in Three Chapters. Chapter II.	93

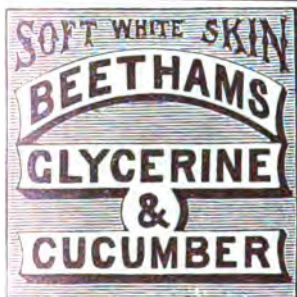
No. 951.	
Gretchen. Book I. Chapter VIII. Book II. Chapter I.	95
Some Confessions; Literary and Otherwise	95
Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Elgin and Nahta ..	95
Our Aviary	95
The Shepherd of the Salt Lake. A Story in Three Chapters. Chapter III.	95
No. 952.	
Gretchen. Book II. Chapters II., III.	95
Paracelsus	95
Only a Week. A Poem	95
Among the Fruit Merchants	95
A Brush with Chinese Pirates	95
"If you want a thing done you must do it yourself"	95

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No. 550. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER VI. WHAT HE SAID.

THROUGH her little square casement Gretchen could see the apple boughs swaying, and the broad sunshine streaming over dew-wet blossom and leaf.

She sprang up from sleep, and wondered vaguely why she was happy. Then memory came back in thronging thoughts that told of yesterday, and she hastened with glad young feet, that scarcely touched the ground, to that new world of love and light which lay beyond the long-closed garden gates. He was there—waiting.

Bari was in the background, but discreetly retired. His master could do without his aid, now.

Only when she stood face to face with the young man whom Liesschen had declared to be her lover, did Gretchen feel a little odd sense of shyness and surprise.

They shook hands, and the Englishman closed the gate, and drew her arm within his own, and led her into the heart of the woods in silence.

Indeed, he felt speech to be impossible; his heart was so full of tumult and uneasiness.

"What did you do with yourself all yesterday?" he asked, at last. "I went to the woods again, but I did not see you."

"I was in disgrace," she answered deprecatingly. "I spent the day in my own room."

"What a shame!" he cried in his indifferent German. "Your relations must be very tyrannical people."

He had heard about these same people. He had gained an insight into her life and its hidden mystery of reproach, since yesterday. His own quick fancy supplied the rest; but she herself was as unconscious of his knowledge, as of her own history.

"I told you what they were," she said with a sigh. "But I think aunt would not be so severe if it were not for Sister Maria."

"Let us sit down," he said abruptly; "I want to speak to you about your future."

She guided him to the fallen trunk of a long-felled tree—lichen-covered and moss-grown—and there they seated themselves. She drew her hand away from his arm, linked it in her other hand, and so, with head a little bent, and the soft colour coming and going in her cheeks, sat listening.

"I have only seen you twice," he said earnestly. "But I can't bear to think of you so young, and beautiful, and friendless, and condemned to such a cruel fate. Tell me, is there no one to whom you could appeal—no other relation or friend who would save you from this living grave?"

"No," she said simply. "I told you I had no one to care for me enough to give me a home. Aunt says it is best for me to go into the Convent. I have always heard that, ever since I can remember."

"But you don't wish it?"

"Oh, no. No! No!" she cried passionately. "I cannot bear the thought! It was hateful before—but now——"

She stopped suddenly. Some instinct of maidenly shyness whispered to her heart a warning. Even to a lover—it was not wise to speak too plainly.

But he did not want her to speak. He was not unversed in women's ways, and he knew well enough what lurked beneath

that half-uttered avowal. A little thrill of triumph ran through his heart. He took off the hateful glasses and bent eagerly forward, looking with longing eyes into the lovely girlish face.

"Now," he said eagerly, "you believe that there is something better in life than a gloomy faith, and a bigoted religion. Now you know that youth and beauty have been given to women for some other purpose than seclusion—immolation—self-sacrifice! Is it not so?"

"You have told me that," she answered gravely. "Perhaps I am wrong to listen to you. I am so ignorant. No one has ever spoken to me as you have done. Tell me, then, for what women live besides—besides religion?"

"For love," he said, low and passionately. "For men to worship and adore! To be wives, and mothers, and helpmates. To lift our gross natures into their own regions of purity and faith! To make the world a paradise. To give to us tired toilers a glimpse of the Heaven that lives in their own dreams. That is what God made them for—some of them—at least!"

His eyes met her own. They were soft, humid, abstracted—the eyes of a child in some sweet maze of doubt, and their innocent questioning smote him to the heart.

"Tell me, now," she said, half-timidly. "What is—Love?"

Such a question, from lips young and beautiful, and sacred yet from any lover's touch! Such a question from woman's heart to man's, while yet the blood of youth ran hot and swift through every vein, and beat in every pulse! The impulse of his heart was to take her in his arms and touch that sweet child-mouth with Love's first kiss; but something in the innocent eyes kept back the impulse, and stayed the desecrating touch. He drew a sharp, short breath, and his eyes sought the ground instead of her own fair face.

"Love?" he said. "It is not easy to tell. When it comes—we know. Before that—it is only to fancy an angel that brings perfect dreams, and wake to darkness."

"But the love you spoke of yesterday," she said, "that made the gods human, and humanity as gods. That must be beautiful. The world holds that, you said. I think I would choose such a world in preference now to what Sister Maria

tells me of that other. I must be very wicked, but I never can fancy the joys or glories of which she speaks. I try so hard, but I cannot. Now, when you speak I seem to see all you say, and I—oh! I think it would make me far, far happier to be loved, than even to be as good and as pious as Sister Maria."

She spoke with the beautiful audacity of perfect fearlessness and perfect innocence. It never occurred to her—it could not—that her words held a perilous temptation for two lives—that their unguarded simplicity was as the foundation-stone of a fabric, unstable, beautiful as any dream, but, like a dream, unreal.

Again he looked at her, and the look thrilled her as never look or word had yet held power to do. Her face grew very white, her eyes filled. The sweet air and the noise of singing birds, the soft rustle of the wind above her head, seemed to reach her in some dizzy, far-off way.

He bent towards her, and took her hand in his:

"We will not talk of Sister Maria," he said, "only of ourselves."

The colour came back to her face. She let her hand lie passive in that close, warm clasp.

"Ah, yes!" she sighed. "Tell me about yourself, your home, your life in the world. Mine must seem so simple and stupid, I wonder you care to hear of it."

"I care to hear it because it is yours," he answered tenderly. "What affects you interests me."

"But why should it?"

He smiled, and once again he looked at her.

"I will tell you of myself—yes," he said softly; "but only of myself since I have known you. I do not think I feel much interest in what goes before."

So another charmed hour went on; and she listened as Juliet listened to her Romeo—as Marguerite to Faust—as Héloïse to Abelard—as from all time to all time women will listen to the magic of lovers' tales, and hang entranced on the music of lovers' tongues.

It was he who woke to caution and remembrance first, who suggested that time had not stayed for their foolish converse, and that prudence demanded her return.

She rose at once. Her eyes were dim and dilated, her senses were lulled into a very ecstasy of dreams—beautiful, absorbed, child-like, unreal dreams, that

seemed to have changed the face of the whole world and her whole life.

In silence they walked to the gate. In silence he took her hand, and raised it to his lips.

"You will come again to-morrow?" he asked very softly.

That touch thrilled her as with some new, vague fear which, amidst all her new-found joy, spoke warningly.

"I do not know," she stammered, and looked down at the hand his lips had touched, in sweet and sudden shame. "Is it—right?"

"Right!" he echoed vaguely. "Why not right to-morrow as to-day?"

Still she hesitated; why, she could not tell. Her eyes looked at him, appealing for guidance, help, advice, but finding none. Nothing so calls forth the innate selfishness of a man's heart as the fear of losing the object of its newly-awakened interest.

"You must come," he said decidedly. "I have so many things to tell you. The time has been too short to say half. Promise you will come. Why should you be afraid?"

She lifted her bright head proudly. "I am not afraid. Why should I be?" she said with her natural fearlessness. "Only, when I have begun to be happy, it will be so much harder to turn away to gloom and sadness once again."

"And have you begun to be happy?" he asked, flushing like a girl at the unconscious confession of his power. "Then you shall not go back to gloom and sadness if I can help it. And, if so little make you happy, a little more will make you happier. And I will teach you, Gretchen, what that 'little more' is. You will come to-morrow?"

"I—I cannot promise," she cried trembling, for the passion in his eyes and in his voice terrified her.

"Yes, you can, and you must. I shall wait here till you do. Say yes, child. You are not a coquette as yet, but you play with fire as if you were. Say yes."

Her head drooped. She grew very pale, then opened the gate suddenly, and passed in. Her hands trembled, her breath came short and uneven through her parted lips.

"You would not ask me if it were wrong?" she murmured appealingly from her vantage ground. "You know so much better than I do."

"Trust me, child—it is not wrong," he

said earnestly. "I could not harm you for all the world."

"I do trust you," she said simply; "and I will come to-morrow."

She moved away, less buoyant of step than she had been yesterday—less jubilant of heart, too; for all that she knew she was happy, oh, so happy! Hitherto her heart had been like a placid stream, clear, smooth, untroubled. But to such a stream the first breath of passion is as a disturbing blast that ruffles the still, calm surface, and sets in swifter motion all its hidden currents.

The Gretchen, moving up the garden walks, with head downbent and eyes full of tender dreams, would never again ask, "What is Love?" for to her Love had come this fair spring day; come in unseen, subtle guise, to be the master of her fate—to mould or mar her life!

CHAPTER VII. DISCOVERED.

"WELL," said Lisschen sharply, looking at Gretchen's absorbed face, "has he asked thee in marriage? Is it settled?"

The girl started.

"I do not know," she said shyly. "Marriage? No, he did not speak of marriage. What haste you are in, Lisschen!"

The old woman was bustling about the kitchen preparing coffee. She gave a short grunt.

"Haste! Well, there is need of haste; though, indeed, how you are to wed anyone, guarded and spied upon as you are, I cannot tell. Still, I said I would help; and so I will. Listen, child," and she dropped her voice and came nearer. "Do you know you have to go to confession to-day?"

Gretchen started and turned pale.

"Oh, Lisschen!" she cried beseechingly, "and must I tell about the Englishman?"

"Not unless you are a fool," answered the old woman. "Keep it back for a time, and then confess if you feel it will make your soul easier. Did you whisper of love or lovers, you would be clapped into your Convent at once, with never a question of will or wish about it. When you are married, you can confess what you please."

"It must be very strange to be—married," said the girl, seating herself on the wooden bench. "Do people who love always get married, Lisschen?"

A grim smile curled the thin lips of the old woman.

"Mostly they do," she said. "They say 'tis Heaven's law. I always thought it a question of dowry myself."

"I cannot fancy myself married," the girl went on dreamily; "and are husbands better than lovers, do you fancy?"

"Of course!" grumbled the old woman. "They provide for you and work for you, instead of making silly speeches; but women—mostly young ones—prefer the lovers. And that reminds me," she added, "you must get your lover to take you to England to be married. Here he cannot satisfy the laws. It is different in his own country. A man can marry whom he pleases, without asking leave of anyone."

"Laws!" murmured the girl, vaguely. "What have laws to do with it, Lisschen?"

"Oh, that is not for me to say," answered Lisschen, shortly. "There are laws for everything here; 'tis to make life harder, I fancy. I never could get the wrongs or the rights of them myself; but then I'm simple and ignorant, and the priests tell one what to do when one is in difficulty."

"But the priests would not counsel me to marry the Englishman," said Gretchen thoughtfully.

"No, that would they not. Therefore, I say, keep your own counsel for a time, and put a good face on matters, and learn your tasks as they tell you. It will not be for very long."

"Oh, Lisschen," cried the girl suddenly, as she looked up at the old wrinkled crabbed face, "do you know that if—now—I had to give up this hope—if I never saw him again—if I had to enter the Convent, it would kill me. I could not bear it. I should pray to Heaven to let me die!"

"Hush!" cried the old woman warningly. "Somebody is coming. Begone into the parlour. It is not well that you should be seen here."

Thicker and thicker the tangled webs of deceit were weaving themselves about the girl's life. From one trivial concealment how much had sprung! how much had yet to spring!

The day passed on in its usual dreary routine. The dreaded hour of confession came and went. Thanks to Lisschen's advice and the priest's own knowledge of her secluded and rigorous life, she managed to escape question, or suspicion.

But she felt terribly guilty and unhappy all the same, and even her new, sweet secret lost some of its charm.

That night she slept ill, and was restless

and feverish; but, all the same, she was up and out as the clock struck five. No one was waiting at the gate as she let herself through, and a little thrill of fear ran through her heart, as she thought that something might have chanced to keep her lover from his appointment. She called him that in the most natural and innocent manner. Lisschen had said so, and it seemed but right and natural to continue the appellation.

Moment after moment passed. The sunlight fell through the leaves, the birds were singing loudly and gaily among the branches, but for once the sunlight and the song were dull and meaningless to her. She listened for a step on the grass, a voice in her ear, that should bring back the glory and the music once again.

At last the gate swung back. A voice called to her softly:

"You have been waiting! I am so sorry!"

He reached her side in a moment, and took her hand in greeting. "Can you forgive me? The truth is I overslept myself, and that tiresome man never called me."

"I am so glad you have come," she said frankly, "I feared you were ill."

"And you were sorry—you hoped I would be here?" he asked softly.

"Oh yes," she said gravely and seriously. "You see it is pleasant to have someone to talk to besides Lisschen; and I should miss you very much now—though, indeed, I don't know why I should, for I have only seen you three times in all."

"Yes," he said smiling. "But we know each other very well for all that, Gretchen, do we not? You see I call you Gretchen. And I want you to call me by my name. Will you?"

"What is it?" she asked.

"Neale—Neale Kenyon. Can you get your little foreign tongue round that, do you think? I should like to teach you English, child. Would you learn?"

"I would learn anything you taught me," said Gretchen simply. "And that is not a hard name to say—Neale—for I can pronounce it quite easily. Yes, I should like to learn English. You know my father was of your nation."

"Ah, true," he answered, and his brow clouded suddenly.

It occurred to him sharply, like a reproach, that he wished he had not seen this girl; or that, having seen her, it was possible to forget the childish, dimpled

beauty of the young face, and the waking soul that looked out now from those lovely eyes. "Perhaps her mother's eyes were like them," he said to himself, and then he remembered Bari's story, and felt thankful that he at least was not a villain like that mother's betrayer.

"Come," he said at last, shaking off these gloomy thoughts with an effort, "let us sit down again; I want to talk to you. Tell me, have you thought of me at all since we parted yesterday?"

"But—yes," she said with all seriousness. "How could I help it? Do you know that for you I committed a great sin?"

"A sin—you?" he echoed incredulously. "I should like to hear it."

"I withheld a true confession from Father Joseph," she said slowly. "It is very wicked, but I dared not tell him of you, or I should never be allowed to see you again."

The young man's lips curled with faint contempt. He had nothing in common with priesthood and superstition.

"You were quite right," he said indignantly. "What business has one human being to arrogate to himself the right of knowing the secrets of another's heart, the feelings of another's soul? Do not say anything of me, Gretchen, to anyone until I give you leave. Promise me that."

"I promise," she said readily. "Indeed I do not wish to speak of you to anyone else. I like only to think of you to myself."

"You innocent child," he said tenderly. "I wonder if you would care very much if you never saw me again? Tell me."

"Care," she echoed dreamily, "I cannot tell if I would 'care.' It would be a great chill blank, and the old life would close over me—and I—I should pray to Heaven to let me die. That is all."

"All!" he said, half glad, half shamed at the innocent confession, and yet proud of the love he had awakened for himself. "It is too much, child, far too much. And why should you care like that when you know me so little?"

She shook her head.

"I cannot tell. As you say, it is strange, for I have seen you but three times, and I have known Lisschen, and aunt, and grandfather all my life, and yet——"

"And yet—would you leave them for me, did I ask it?" he said hurriedly.

"Leave them?" Her eyes grew troubled and fell beneath his own. "I do not know what you mean."

He drew her towards him as he might have drawn a child, and his lips lightly touched her hands.

"Look in my eyes, Gretchen," he whispered. "I think you do know what I mean."

She lifted the long lashes shyly, questioning, and for a moment met that eager, burning gaze. Then the colour rushed in a glowing tide over cheek and brow and throat. She had learned her lesson, and he knew it.

"Ah, child," he murmured, and drew her closer yet to his beating heart. "But yesterday you asked me what was love; to-day you can give me the answer for yourself. Or stay, we do not need words, you and I. This—shall teach it you."

Softly his lips touched her own—the little flower-like velvet mouth that never yet had felt the touch of any lover's kiss.

In that moment something reverent, pitiful, chivalrous, stirred his heart, and purged away the dross of grosser passions. In that moment she was sacred to him, and he would no more have whispered thought or word of harm to her, than have struck her with a blow.

As for her she leant there against his heart, rapt in a very ecstasy of wonder. A light came over her face, changing all its childish youth into glory—changing it as daybreak changes earth and sky. The colour that had flushed her cheeks crept upwards to the golden ripples of her hair, and she trembled like a leaf in his arms.

But she was not frightened or ashamed, only glad with a gladness that made her senses reel, and set the sunny leaves into mazy circles, and made the blue sky swim before her sight, and lifted her heart, her soul, her very being, on the strong, swift current of its unintelligible happiness to bear her—so it seemed—into the very courts of Paradise.

Moments passed, filled only by broken words. Great joy is never prolific of expression. Gretchen still nestled there as naturally as a child who has found a resting-place, and listened entranced to her lover's broken murmurs.

"I have so often heard of people falling in love at first sight. . . . I can't say I ever believed in it. But my whole life has changed since the moment I lifted the bandage from my eyes and saw you sitting on that bank with the daisies in your lap. . . . Do you remember, dear? That look set the wheels of Fate moving

rapidly enough. I think you have never been out of my thoughts a single moment since. And yet what a child you are, and how ignorant of your power! But you love me, Gretchen, and love will make a woman of you, as it did of your namesake with the daisies. . . . is it not so?"

"Who was she?" asked Gretchen innocently. "And was she fond of daisies too?"

"Yes," he answered somewhat hurriedly, feeling no desire to repeat that ill-omened tale. "She was in love, and she asked the daisies if her lover was true?"

"The daisies could not know."

He smiled.

"Of course not, sweetheart. But she asked them all the same. Her heart gave the answer."

"And that was——"

"That he loved her passionately, wholly, entirely, as I love you, Gretchen."

"Ah," sighed the girl, raising her heavy lids, "how happy she must have been!"

"Not happier than you, or anyone who loves, my child. It is an old story; but we each think it new when it comes to ourselves."

"It is very new to me," she said with a faint sigh, "for no one has ever loved me. I wonder why you do," she added, drawing a little away from his arms and looking up with soft and puzzled eyes to his face.

"I cannot tell you," he said tenderly. "Perhaps because you are so fair, and sweet, and look so true; perhaps because you love me; perhaps—and best reason of all—because I can't help myself. Don't puzzle your innocent heart for reasons, sweetheart; accept the fact."

She shook her head.

"I shall never think it anything but wonderful," she said seriously. "You, who are so clever, who know everything and have seen so much, to care for a little ignorant child! Perhaps," she added sorrowfully, "you will be sorry one day. There must be beautiful women in your world, and great and clever women too."

"So there are," he said smilingly. "But I know none with an innocent soul such as yours, Gretchen, and none with that look which lives in your eyes and springs from the purest of pure sources. And so I love you, dear, and that must content you; for no man could say more even were his heart fuller than my own."

"There is no need to say more," answered the girl, and raised her drooping face and looked at him with those deep,

haunting eyes. "But I shall never cease to think how wonderful, and oh, how good it is of you to love me!"

A little sob broke the faltering words. Her full heart scarce could bear its new weight of joy. Then, swift as thought, her face paled, she sprang to her feet with eyes dilated and full of a terrible fear. Her hands fell to her side.

"Look!" she cried in a strange, stifled voice. "It is—grandfather!"

Neale Kenyon rose also to his feet. Some few yards off a solitary figure stood, stern, fierce, wrathful of face—the figure of a man old in years and prejudices, and pitiless of heart and nature. One look told so much of his history to the young Englishman; one look, and then Gretchen was snatched from his side, and all the bitterest and most terrible invectives of the Teutonic tongue were hissing from those white and trembling lips.

Neale Kenyon could not stem the torrent, so he waited patiently until it should have exhausted itself. Then he spoke simply, coolly, to the point.

"Sir, I love your granddaughter. It is true that I am not as yet acquainted with yourself, but I should have called to lay my proposals before you in proper form. I am not sufficiently acquainted with German etiquette to know how or why I have erred in speaking to her. If you will permit me to call or explain——"

The torrent broke out again:

"Explain! Himmel! no puppy of an Englishman shall set foot in my house! Explain, what is there to explain! Nothing! The girl is not for any man's love. She is vowed to the Church, and to the Church she shall go. Explain! Could temerity and insolence go further! These dogs of Englishmen think they are to have things all their own way!" and so on, with shaking hands and furious tongue, and a whirlwind of passionate gestures that fairly stunned and bewildered Neale Kenyon.

It was in vain that he attempted to speak, in vain that he asked for a moment's patience. The old man waved him imperiously back, and seizing poor little sobbing, trembling Gretchen by the arm, dragged her away in a fury of wrath and indignation.

The young Englishman stood there almost stunned with the suddenness of these events:

"What am I to do?" he muttered, pacing to and fro the little glade where

his love-story had been so ruthlessly interrupted. "Good Heavens, what a brute the man is! Poor child—poor little innocent! Will they force her into the Convent now, as revenge! What a dilemma! What on earth am I to do?"

"Monsieur is in trouble!" said the soft, silky voice of his attendant in his ear. "I saw the angry grandfather, and the young lady sobbing as if her heart would break. It is all then discovered."

"Oh, Bari," cried Neale Kenyon distractedly, "tell me, my good fellow, how one can pacify a German bear. That poor child, what will become of her?"

The Italian shrugged his shoulders.

"It is like the comedies they play—parted lovers, angry guardians, and so on. You must do also as the lover in the play—circumvent them, Monsieur."

"Yes, but how?" asked the young Englishman gloomily.

The Italian looked at him with something very like contempt.

"How? There is always a way when one loves. Time will show. And we have a friend in the citadel fortunately. The good and ugly Lisschen will inform us of what goes on; but Monsieur had better prepare for flight. The gentlemen of the black robe do not like wolves to meddle with their lambs, and it will have to end in robbing the sheep-fold, I fear."

The young man threw himself down on the fallen tree, and groaned aloud. "I wish I had never come here. I wish I had never seen her—no, I don't wish that. I can't give her up, Bari, that's impossible; and yet I don't see how I can marry her."

The Italian looked at him with his dark, keen eyes and smiled. "Monsieur wishes to marry the young lady? Monsieur is not aware of the many complicated rules and laws appertaining to civil contracts. Besides, there is the insurmountable barrier—difference of religion, and—what of the young English lady to whom Monsieur is engaged?"

"I am not engaged," was the fierce answer. "Mind your own business, Bari. I am free to marry whom I choose, and I never cared for Miss Kenyon, and she knows it. But about this young lady—something must be done, and at once. Can you get speech of the old woman and hear what has happened? You say she took kindly to bribes: promise her anything—anything—a hundred pounds, if you like, if she will only help us. The

child must not be left to the tender mercies of that crew. Do you hear, Bari?"

"I hear, Monsieur; I will do my best. If it is a question of German brains against my own, I do not fear the results. They are heavy, ponderous, speculative, but they know not—finesse!"

FESTAL CAKES.

CONFECTIONS of flour have, at all times and among all nations, had a conspicuous place in the performance of social and religious rites, and England would seem to be specially remarkable for the number of such feasts. There is scarcely an English county without its special cake; certainly there are few festal occasions unmarked by its consumption in some form. The daily event of marriage gives one opportunity to cake makers, and, in this case the cake is so important that it is strange so few ladies seek to know the origin and meaning of the sugary structures, before which they find themselves on the eventful day. The gorgeous and indigestible bride-cake of to-day is eaten in deference to the rules of conventionality; but it once had a poetical significance which it may be interesting to recall. For the modern wedding-cake is but the glorified descendant of the Roman loaf, which was broken by the newly-made husband before the priests of Jove in the presence of the citizens, and eaten with his wife, in token that thereafter they were to share each other's goods and be dependent on each other for comfort and subsistence.

It will be generally found that many of the cakes eaten at different seasons, in different places, bear some sort of resemblance to each other, and that the interior of an ordinary mince-pie is one of the most favourite bases for these confections. "God-cakes," which stand first on the list of commemorative dainties, being the fare chosen for New Year's Day in Coventry and various other parts of England, are of this nature. They are triangular in form; but by no means of the deceptive character of a three-cornered puff, whose hollowness and general delusiveness, as regards its interior, is eminently calculated to impress upon the youthful mind the melancholy fact that things are not what they seem. They are moderately thick, and should have alining of at least the same dimensions. Like the Simnel, they vary in size according to the price; some being sold on New Year's Day, in the streets of Coventry, at two a

penny, whilst others are manufactured of a size and richness which render them a worthy gift for the festive season.

Of much more gastronomic and general importance is the next cake festival, occurring on the Feast of the Epiphany, or Twelfth Night, though the custom has much declined of recent years, Birch's famous shop being no longer remarkable for its display, while Baddeley's bequest to the performers at Drury Lane Theatre has been so elaborated that the cake itself dwindles into insignificance.

From the most remote period of Christianity it had been customary to commemorate the Three Kings by indulgence in a pleasantry called the Election of Kings by Bean, a practice probably adapted, like many other Christian ceremonies, from some Pagan custom, perhaps from that observed by Roman children, who, at the end of their Saturnalia, drew lots, with beans, to see who should be King. Subsequently, in England, the idea was conceived of inserting the bean in a cake, a similar practice prevailing in France.

Under the Stuarts, the innocent cake celebration was made an excuse for costly and boisterous Court festivals, at which gambling was a great feature. One of the naval chaplains of Charles the Second, speaking of a Twelfth Night party aboard ship, says: "Wee had a great kake made, in which was put a beane for the King, a pease for the Queen, a cloave for the Knave, etc. The kake was cut into several pieces in the great cabin, and all put into a napkin, out of which everyone took his piece, as out of a lottery; then each piece is broken to see what was in it, which caused much laughter, and more to see us tumble one over the other in the cabin by reason of the ruff weather."

The pancake, eaten, as everyone knows, on the day prior to the beginning of Lent, is a decided landmark in the calendar, and may, perhaps, be regarded as an indication of the coming spring. It is curious to observe with what energy everyone addresses himself to the consumption of these cakes on Shrove Tuesday, as if some important religious ceremony were being performed. Pancakes have been associated with this day from time immemorial, though of their origin, as a suitable refectation for Shrove-tide, there is no evidence. "As fit as a pancake"—for which expression Shakespeare's clown in *All's Well that Ends Well* is responsible—seems to have been a general term, though whether to

have obtained this distinction is greater than to be favourably compared to a fiddle, is a point as yet undecided. Taylor, the sweet singer of the Thames, quaintly alludes to this Shrove-tide custom. "There is a thinge called wheaten floure," he says, "which the cooks do mingle with water, eggs, spice, and other tragical and magical enchantments, and then they put by little and little into a frying-pan of boiling suet, where it makes a confused, dismal hissing (like the Lermian snakes in the reeds of Acheron), until at last, by the skill of the cook, it is transformed into the form of a flip-jack, called a pancake, which ominous incantation the people do devour very greedily." In Elizabeth's time, the Eton College cook fastened a pancake to the school knocker on Shrove Tuesday; and at Westminster on that day the practice of tossing a pancake still prevails. The cook, entering the schoolroom, hurls the pancake aloft, and the boy who catches it unbroken carries it to the deanery, and receives an honorarium of a pound.

Following close upon the eating of the Carnival dainties comes the Simnel Festival, peculiar to Mid-Lent, or Mothering Sunday, or, as it is also called, Refreshment Sunday. As pancakes are used as the sign of festivity before the austerities of the Fast season commences, so the Simnel marks the relaxation permitted at Mid-Lent. Evidently the usage of Simnel cakes is of great antiquity. The name is probably derived from "simila," fine flour, the term "simanellus" among the mediæval writers being used to denote a cake. There are, however, many legends respecting the origin of the name; and in Shropshire especially, where the Simnel is a great institution, the explanations are as varied as they are curious. One is that the father of Lambert Simnel was a baker who made these cakes. In consequence of his son's notoriety, persons were in the habit of visiting his shop for the ostensible purpose of purchasing cakes, but in reality to see the Pretender's home and relations; and in time the cakes bought of the old man were called by his name, though by philological analogy, it is more likely that the baker was named after his cakes.

The favourite tale, however, is that of an old Shropshire couple named Nelly and Simon, who were expecting their children to visit them at the close of Lent. Wishing to celebrate the occasion, Nelly took the unleavened dough left from the Lenten baking and made a deep crust shape,

wherein she put the remains of the Christmas plum-pudding. Then the question arose as to how it should be cooked. Sim said it should be boiled, Nelly maintained that it should be baked. This led to a domestic quarrel, and having exhausted her stock of abuse, Mistress Nelly seized the wooden stool whereon she sat and hurled it at Sim's head, whilst he playfully retaliated with a broom. Finally the matter was compromised, and the cake was first boiled and afterwards baked, the result being so satisfactory that the cakes became popular, and were called Sim-Nel, compounded after Mr. Lewis Carroll's manner, of portions of the two words Simon and Nelly. The cakes, as they are now eaten, are certainly prepared in this way. The crust, a deep battlemented confection of fine flour and water, coloured a deep yellow, being filled with a rich compound of the mincemeat and plum-pudding order, is criss-crossed with peel, made very stiff, tied in a cloth, and boiled for several hours. After this it is well brushed over with egg and baked, until it reaches such a degree of hardness that one can quite believe the story of the lady who, on receiving one as a present, mistook it for a footstool, and used it as such. On Mid-Lent Sunday there was an ancient observance in which this sweet cake played a most conspicuous part. This was the annual visiting of parents on this day. Hence the title of "Mothering" Sunday, and as such an event required the necessary elements of festivity, it was customary for the young folks to bring the sweet cakes as a species of filial offering, and the basis of a feast. Herrick sings:

I'll to thee a Simnel bring,
'Gainst thou go a-mothering;
So that, when she blesses thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give me.

That some religious significance was attached to the eating of these cakes at this season in early times is evident from the fact that they were marked with figures of the Virgin, and sometimes with the emblems of the Passion. Consecrated cakes at religious festivals were common enough among the Teutonic races, being, of course, but the survival of the Pagan customs. Our Good Friday buns, which come next in the cake calendar, and are eaten in supposed pious commemoration of one of the greatest events in the Christian tragedy, are, strange to say, only an adapted form of a very questionable entertainment wherein the heathen Saxons indulged in

honour of their goddess Eastre. The Christian clergy, finding that, with the adoption of the new faith, the converts were by no means disposed to abolish the festivities connected with heathen rites, sought to compromise matters by permitting the feasting under other names, and with the buns stamped with Christian signs. Egyptian worshippers, too, had their bun, which, in many respects, seems to have been an ancestor of ours, being horned, to symbolise the sacred heifer, "bous," or, in its inflected form, "boun," whence, perhaps, our word.

In China, Mexico, parts of India, and other countries, the deities are worshipped with cakes, but, curiously enough, in continental Roman Catholic countries, Good Friday is not commemorated by the hot cross-bun. Old customs die hard in this country, but the cross-bun seems certainly to be declining in favour. Its quality is by no means what it was in the days of the "Royal" bun houses, and we are inclined to think that this has as much affected their popularity as any other reason.

Tansy cakes and tansy puddings, where-with the joys of Eastertide are celebrated, are of a less substantial and indigestible character than their predecessors, the cakes being about an eighth of an inch thick and seven inches in diameter, white in colour, and having a mingled flavour of sweet and bitter. This is symbolical of the bitter herbs commanded at the Paschal Feast, and of the sweetness of its joys. In the Southern Counties tansies are carried round by the parish clerk as an Easter offering; and in return for these cakes, which are distributed after service on Good Friday, it is customary to make a small present of money, according to one's means. Anciently, when ball-playing was one of the special features of Eastertide, ecclesiastics, both high and low, indulged in the pastime in the churches, tansy cakes being the prize. Sometimes the dignitaries had a dance and a game of ball during the singing of the antiphon, after which priests and choristers retired to the refectories to consume gammon of bacon and tansies. In the parish of Biddenden in Kent, there is an endowment for the distribution of cakes to poor persons on Easter Sunday afternoon. The cakes are impressed with two female figures, supposed to represent widows, "as the general objects of a charitable institution."

During the summer months, when there

are no events to commemorate, digestion is given time to recover ; but the first possible occasion is snatched at by the Northern folk, and we accordingly find November the fifth celebrated through the North country as a cake festival, "Parkin," a confection of coarse oatmeal and treacle, somewhat similar to gingerbread, being the special dainty. Then comes the great festival of mince-pies and plum-puddings. Mince-pies were in great favour as early as 1596 in this country, but they were then known as shred, or Christmas pies, the latter name being the most usual. It will be remembered that the self-approving Jack Horner was eating a dainty thus described when he uttered the famous remark ; and Dr. Parr, on being asked once by a lady when it was correct to commence eating mince-pies, replied : "Begin on O. Sapientia ; but please to say Christmas pie, not mince-pie." The Puritans had a fervent horror of Christmas pies—

The high-shoe lords of Cromwell's making
Were not for dainties—roasting, baking ;
The chiefest food they found most food in
Was rusty bacon and bag-pudding ;
Plum broth was popish, and mince-pie—
Oh, that was flat idolatry !

Subsequently the Society of Friends placed their veto upon them, and even some Church folk at one time demurred at their consumption by the clergy ; in reference to which Bickerstaffe wrote : "The Christmas pie is, in its own nature, a kind of consecrated cake, and a badge of distinction ; and yet it is often forbidden the Druid of the family. Strange that a sirloin of beef, whether boiled or roasted, when entire is exposed to the outmost depredations and invasions, but if minced into small pieces and tossed up with plumbs and sugar, it changes its property, and forsooth is meat for his master."

Plum-pudding scarcely comes under the title of festal cakes, having had its origin in plum-porridge, a compound of meat, raisins, currants, cloves, mace, ginger, prunes, and brown bread, and being, even in its present form, scarcely of cake-like character. Yet its consumption marks a festival, and, as a commemorative confection, its mention may not be out of place. Just as the Twelfth Night celebration brings with it the initial cake of a new year, so the feast for the dying year's obsequies is furnished by the Christmas plum-pudding ; and the annual consumption of the latter dainty amid all the gay and genial associations with which it is

surrounded, may be regarded as a gentle reminder of the insatiable and restless appetite of "Time, the devourer of things."

A RUN TO SANDRINGHAM.

I TOOK a run down to Sandringham the other day, to enjoy the fine air and to see the latest improvements. If you are staying at Lynn, or if you are sojourning at Hunstanton, the latest and most breezy of the Norfolk watering-places, the distance to be traversed is only some half dozen miles by rail and between two and three by road. During the absence of the Royal family the place may be seen every Tuesday and Friday. One or two practical hints to the intending visitor may be useful. He should write to Mr. Beck, the agent at Sandringham, for an order. If he omits to do this, he will have to make a further walk to Mr. Beck's abode, a pretty and interesting walk. I should recommend him to come by Wolferton and return by Dersingham, or vice versa. Wolferton is rather the nearest, and is the station invariably used by the Royal family. There is a new portico to the station expressly built for the Prince and his people, and in a few yards you pass through the gates of his domain. The estate consists of some eleven thousand acres, which stretch from the Hall down to the sea-side, to the beach of the Wash. The park is only a small part of the estate, and beyond the park are the gardens, which are comparatively small but in exquisite taste. Walking on the turf adjoining the road, you startle the rabbits that everywhere scurry away at your approach ; all around are "the innumerable ear and tail." You come to a spot where four roads meet, and you must be very careful that you turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but keep straight on. You must leave on the left a pleasant house, called "The Folly," where sometimes some Sandringham visitors stay when the Hall is overflowing with guests. As you come nearer on, the wayside turf is broader ; the wide-foliated timber thickens, and throws a more massive shade. You pass by the revolving gates that introduce you to the path leading to the church. You see the pretty house assigned to Lieut.-General Probyn, Controller of the Household. Then you come to the beautiful Norwich gates, among the most beautiful in the world, stately with many armorial bearings. There

is a fine broad avenue of trees between the gates and the mansion, but it is rather a pity that it is such a short one. Right in front, at first through a forest avenue, stretches the road to Dersingham, a village about a mile off, with a railway station two miles beyond that.

I am afraid the Prince seldom sees the beauty of Sandringham at the time when it is most beautiful. He comes down in November for the shooting, and then he celebrates his birthday. One night he entertains all the grand people at a dance, and the next night he entertains his tenants and ever so many of the Norfolk farmers. It is not at all difficult for any respectable Norfolk farmer and his womenkind to get an invitation for a Sandringham. The Prince and Princess and their children are positively adored in the neighbourhood. The people about will tell you that the Princess is the finest lady in the world, and that there never were such young ladies as her daughters. As for the Prince of Wales, he will enter into free conversation with the poorest labourer he may meet. The people like to look at him while he takes his very constant walks. During his absence the big Norwich gates are kept closed. They are open every evening about seven o'clock. Then a big policeman stands by them, a mail cart rattles up with letters, and they are closed once more.

The visitors make for the dairy, the stables, the kennels, the lawn-tennis court, the model farm. The Norfolk folk tell you that they often have given them a delicious draught of milk at the dairy. The Princess's new tea-room, or Strasburg room there, is especially admired, filled with precious presents that she has received. You go off to the kennels. The dogs seem wild with delight to receive human beings. They climb up to the bars and lick your hands or receive a caress. There are dogs of all sorts and sizes—a menagerie well worth inspection. There are Esquimaux dogs, St. Bernard dogs, retrievers, collies, spaniels, terriers—any number of them—and some scarce varieties. There are monkeys, I believe, somewhere about, but I did not see them. There is a bear-pit, with a pair of shaggy bears; the biggest shows a wonderful alacrity in climbing, and will yield to no bear, not even to the bears of Berne, in his powers of catching.

We come back from the Bachelors' Lodge, where the young Princes will put up, or occasional guests from the Hall. The lake,

some three acres in extent, is quite an aviary in its way. There is a choice collection of scarce water-fowl. The garden has its botanical merits. Many of the trees have their scientific names labelled. You pass one to which there is a description attached, stating that it was planted by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1885. You ascend by some steps to the lawn tennis court. There are lovely lounging chairs for the lookers-on.

There is a great show of araucarias about. Everywhere you perceive that the Prince is served both with zeal and love; he is the kind of good master who makes good servants. The pagoda, or Chinese temple, is covered with curious fancy tiles, and contains a bronze idol enthroned on a monolith of granite. The path leading to the pagoda is lined by trees, most of which have been planted by relatives, friends, and guests of the Prince. The pagoda is near to the Norwich gates. The compartments of these gates are worthy of very careful study by those who are artistically disposed. The leaves of vine and clusters of grapes; the leaves of brier-rose, oak, and convolvulus; the heraldic animals supporting shields; have all been wrought by the workmen from Nature with marvellous fidelity and effect. The kitchen gardens occupy about fifteen acres, half of which are on the other side of the high road, and are rich in garden fruit and hot-house products.

We will now look a little more closely at Sandringham. It was formerly thought that the word denoted the sandy soil; but it is more probably the "ham," or house of the Sandringas, an Anglian family that settled here. In Domesday Book it appears as Sant Dirsingham. It was bought, in 1862, for nearly a quarter of a million, by the Prince of Wales, out of the accumulations of the Duchy of Cornwall, from the Hon. C. Spencer Cowper, at a price which land would certainly not fetch at the present time, and was considered a high price a quarter of a century ago. The country all round is sandy and heathy, with much fern and young plantation. The Prince of Wales is an incessant planter; and planting may be called a favourite, and certainly it is a most useful, hobby of his. Besides the wild land, there is much rich meadow and pasture, much woodland, and salt marshes frequented by many rare water-fowl, snipe, and woodcock. We need not speak of partridges and pheasants. The Prince has also introduced blackcock and red deer.

I noticed in the park, near Sandringham Cottage, some white deer, such as I have not seen elsewhere in English parks. Visiting lately the beautiful park of the King of Denmark, five miles out of Copenhagen, I noticed a great number of similar white deer, and my impression is that the Sandringham white deer are an importation from Denmark.

It was found impossible to use or to restore the house, and it was accordingly rebuilt on the same site. It is in the Elizabethan style, with red brick piles, with stone mouldings and dressings. The workmen in front of the house were very busy, apparently with drains, which must be a constant source of nervousness to the Royal inhabitants. The house has been enlarged by a spacious ball-room and other rooms. The utmost attention has been paid in regard both to fire and water. On the suggestion of Captain Shaw, of the London Fire Brigade, the building was cut into sections by means of iron doors, so that no fire might spread. The water-works are of a very remarkable character. The water-tower is a conspicuous object for many miles round. The source is a chalk spring in the Den Beck Wood. It runs through stone-ware pipes to the pumping station, where the water, which has a natural hardness of seventeen degrees, is softened, by Clark's process, to six degrees. The pumps can deliver a gallon every second.

We go into the church of Sandringham. There are, in fact, three churches connected with the Sandringham estate, all of which are in their turn visited by the Prince of Wales. Sandringham is, in point of fact, the home church, the private chapel of the great house. We believe that the Prince's Hall and houses constitute the entire parish. The mother church is West Newton, which has been beautifully restored, and there is also the parish church of Wolferton. The Prince by no means goes regularly to Sandringham Church. If he did, the little church would be thoroughly crowded out by the mob of tourists. This is the inconvenience which his Royal mother experienced at Crathie. Moreover, a crush to see his family would lead to much inattention and irreverence. The consequence is, that it is never known which church the Prince and Princess and their children will attend. The Prince will frequently attend the evening service at one or other of these churches. Sandringham is rather a diffi-

cult parish, I should say. Besides West Newton and Sandringham, there is a third church "in the marsh;" and for the three churches only two clergymen, the Rector and his Curate. Wolferton, of course, is a distinct parish. This church also is just on the point of being fully restored.

The main attractions are, of course, with Sandringham. It is a very pretty rustic church, but more decorated and adorned than is the manner of rustic churches. There is a side entrance, and a very handsome lych-gate, through which the Royal family pass on their way to church. As they do so, they are within sight of the beautiful grassy grave, surrounded by marble, of the infant Prince whose life was measured by a day. The church has a strongly memorial character. It was restored by Lady Harriet Cowper, the wife of the first owner, in remembrance of their child. It contains a stained-glass window in remembrance of the infant child of the Prince and Princess. There is a stained-glass window in remembrance of Colonel Grey, who died at Sandringham; and there is a brass in remembrance of the late Rector, Mr. Onslow. There is a beautiful tablet in remembrance of the Princess Alice, with a marble medallion portrait, by Boehm, "and erected by her devoted and sorrowing brother, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales." The fine organ was presented by the Prince. The splendid brass eagle lectern was presented by the Princess as a thank-offering for the recovery of her husband from his dangerous illness. There are several other points well worth noticing in the church; the sculptured figure of the guardian angel; the reredos of mosaic tiles, representing the vine and its clusters; and the new font with a tall crocketed cover that dates back to the time of Henry the Seventh. The rectory is a pleasant house, with smooth turf and fine timber. Within recent years the Prince has considerably enlarged the edifice, and we believe has augmented the value of the benefice. The living is consolidated of several parishes. According to Crawford's "Clerical Directory," the Rev. F. A. J. Hervey is Rector of Sandringham-with-West-Newton, Rector of Babingley, and Vicar of Appleton. The reverend gentleman is not so great a pluralist. The population of the four parishes is about five hundred, and the value, with benefices, falls considerably short of the number of souls in comparison with the number of pounds.

The village of West Newton, which is conjoined with Sandringham, the house excepted, is hardly inferior to it in interest. There is a handsome residence, in the Swiss-cottage style, used for the accommodation of extra guests. To a great extent the Prince of Wales has created the village. He has erected the Alexandra Cottages, near the church of West Newton; the Louise Cottages; and the Victoria Cottages, on the Lynn Road. Each cottage stands in a garden of about a quarter of an acre. His Royal Highness now holds the whole of the parish, and nearly the whole of the inhabitants of this pretty village are in his employ. The Prince has enlarged the park by diverting the road and taking down the old mill. He has also thoroughly restored the church, which now possesses much architectural beauty. The church is remarkable for the number and splendour of the gifts that have been presented to it. The Queen gave the organ; the Princess Louise the painted west window; the Duke of Edinburgh the carved oak stalls; the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia the jewelled brass cross; the Duke of Connaught the mosaic tile work; the Duke of Cambridge and his mother the altar-cloth; and the Bishop of Norwich the Bible and Prayer Book. The personal friends of the Prince have also made handsome contributions.

As for the little parish of Appleton, it only contains one farm and four cottages; and its sovereignty is divided between the Prince and Lord Leicester. The famous Pastons had a handsome mansion here, which was burnt down one hundred and eighty years ago, and never rebuilt.

Babingley almost entirely consists of swampy meadows, through which a rivulet meanders to the Wash. We may still discover the shaft of a roadside cross of the fourteenth century. The church stands in the marshy meadows, and is said to occupy the site of the first Christian church ever erected in the county. There is only one farm-house in the parish. There used to be five, but the Princess, with her customary charity, converted others into a hospital for the use of people suffering from illness on the Sandringham estate.

Hunstanton is the nearest watering-place. Thither the Prince and Princess occasionally resort, and there is an excellent convalescent hospital, which is called by their name and fostered by their care. But all through the county you find traces of their presence and their usefulness.

The Reverend Mr. Russell, the famous sporting parson of Devon, used to give interesting accounts of several visits which he made to Sandringham, and of the private life of the place. These have been collected into an interesting volume. Mr. Russell was one of the boldest riders of the West Country, and had indeed been Master of Fox Hounds for a time. When a young man he would ride from seventy to a hundred miles in a day to visit his sweetheart. The Prince of Wales invited him to Sandringham, and told him to put a sermon in his pocket. In a double sense the Prince "gave him a mount." He proved nearly as good a preacher as he was a rider, and he did not feel that there was any inconsistency between the two positions. He used to boast that on one occasion he danced the old year out and the new year in with the Princess. "There is no one else but yourself who can say that," said the Princess. He had to apologise more than once for addressing H.R.H. as "my dear," which was most graciously condoned. He described how assiduous the Prince was in his personal attentions to his guests, and, when he could discover that they had any special tastes, took great care that they should be met. The great drawback was that when the house was very full of guests, the Prince was no longer able to give the same special attention. The whole view of the inner life of Sandringham is most charming, and gives the idea of an eminently English and well-ordered home.

PARVULA.

A TINY, tiny little bud,
With flaxen curls and eyes of blue;
And arch and ever-smiling lips,
That rival roses in their hue.

A tiny, tiny little trot,
With pattering, restless, active feet;
With arms held out, as she her "dad,"
Across the floor starts forth to meet.

A tiny, tiny little grave,
Where, hidden from our loving sight,
Our darling sleeps beneath the turf,
O'er-sprinkled with the daisies white.

A little, little span of time,
And we to her, we trust, shall go;
Where all Earth's tears are wiped away,
And none shall grief or sorrow know!

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY.

IF one saint more than another may be said to hold the fate of lovers in his hand, it is he whose memory is still kept green on the fourteenth of February—Bishop

Valentine. This saint, history tells us, was cruelly beaten with clubs and afterwards beheaded, A.D. 270, by order of Claudius the Second, for succouring the martyrs under the Emperor's persecutions. How he first came to be the guardian saint of lovers it is almost impossible now to say, unless, as Archbishop Wheatley has it, in his "Illustrations to the Prayer Book," it be that "he was a man of most admirable parts, and was so famous for his love and charity that the custom of choosing Valentines upon his festival (which is still practised) took its form from thence." Probably the day of his death may have something to do with his amorous powers, for, on the fourteenth of February, rustics in our country believe that birds begin to choose their mates. Chaucer wrote :

Nature, the vicare of the Almightie Lord,
That hote, colde, hevie, light, moist, and drie,
Hath knit by even number of accord,
In easie voice began to speak and say—
"Foules, take hede of my sentence, I pray,
And for your own ease in fordering your need,
As fast as I may speake I will me speede ;
Ye know well, how, on Seynte Valentine's Daye,
By my statute and through my governaunce
Ye doe chose youre mates, and after fle away,
With hem as I prickle you with plesaunce."

Herrick, in his "Hesperides," bears witness to the same belief, thus :

Ofte have I heard both youth and virgins say
Birds chuse their mates, and couple too, this day.

So does also Shakespeare, in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* :

St. Valentine is past ;
Begin these wood birds but to couple now ?

Country people also seem to have imagined that an influence was inherent in the day, which rendered in some degree binding the lot or chance by which any youth and maid were now thrown together. It was supposed that the first unmarried person of the other sex whom one saw or met on the morning of the fourteenth of February, was a destined wife or a destined husband. Gay says :

And the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune, shall our true love be.

The ancient Romans, on the fifteenth of February, commenced the festival of Luper-calia in honour of the deities Pan and Juno ; and among the rites practised in honour of the goddess, it was customary for the names of young women to be placed in a box, from which they were drawn by the young men, and claimed as brides. This custom gave rise not merely to harmless flirtations, but to disgraceful orgies ; and when Christianity's benign influence

had driven out Paganism, it is supposed that the early pastors, protesting against the former, substituted saints for deities, and selected St. Valentine's Day for the festival of Pan and Juno.

Another authority says that the clergy under St. Valentine instituted lotteries, with the names of saints instead of the young folks. Whichever be correct, it is certain that the custom once begun has gradually grown, until, at the present time, in all civilised countries, the martyred Bishop has the credit of knitting together any number of palpitating hearts. At the various European Courts, during Carnival times, which usually occurred on or about St. Valentine's Day, jousts and feasts were held, and each lady was wont to make choice from the assembled knights of one who bound himself to do her bidding and render her all honourable service during the ensuing year.

In England, as far back as the fourteenth century, a favourite pastime amongst the nobility and gentry, on this saint's day, was to choose for themselves Valentines. John Lydgate, the monk of Bury, refers to this custom in a poem written in praise of Queen Catherine :

Seynte Valentine, of custome yeere by yeere,
Men have a usuaunce in this region

To loke and serche Cupide's Calendare,
And chose theyre choyce by grete affecioun ;
Such as ben pricke with Cupide's Mocioun.

Takyng the choyce as theyr sort dostie falle
But I love oon whiche excellith alle.

Drayton wrote a charming dedication to his Valentine, from which the following is extracted :

Muse, bid the morn awake !
Sad winter now declines,
Each bird doth choose a make
This day's Saint Valentine's ;
For the good Bishop's sake
Get up, and let us see,
What beauty it shall be
That fortune us assigns.
Each little bird this tide
Doth choose her loved peer,
Which constantly abide
In wedlock all the year ;
As nature is their guide,
So may we two be true
This year, nor change for new,
As turtles coupled were.
Let's laugh at them that choose
Their Valentines by lot,
To wear their names that use
Whom idly they have got.
Such poor choice we refuse ;
Saint Valentine befriend
We thus this morn may spend,
Else, Muse, awake her not.

Some authors attribute the origin of Valentines to Madame Royal, the daughter of Henry the Fourth, King of France, who, it is said, built a palace at Turin, which she

called "The Valentine," and, at the opening of it ordered that the ladies should cast lots for lovers, reserving to herself the right of choosing her own.

I think, however, the reader will agree with me that there can be but little doubt of both the custom and cognomen of Valentines existing long before Madame Royal's day. The origin of sending Valentines, again, is generally attributed to Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was made prisoner in 1415, at the battle of Agincourt. The reason for their being called Valentines is probably because he sent the first of these billets doux on St. Valentine's Day. The Duke of Orleans having set the example it was quickly followed, not only by gentlemen, but by ladies likewise.

In that very quaint record of domestic life in England during the reign of Charles the Second, Pepys's Diary, I find some rare illustrations of the customs then practised on St. Valentine's Day. It would appear that married and single alike were equally liable to be chosen as a Valentine, and that a present was regularly given to the party making the choice. In his Diary, February 14th, 1667, Mr. Pepys made this entry: "This morning came up to my wife's bedside (I being up dressing myself) little Will Mercier to his Valentine, and brought her name written on blue paper, in letters of gold, done by himself, very pretty; and we were both pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's Valentine, and it will cost me five pounds, but that I must have laid out had we not been Valentines." Two days later he makes this further entry: "I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my Valentine, she having drawn me; which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing of mottoes as well as names, so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did draw also a motto, and their girl drew another for me. What mine was I forget, but my wife's was 'most courteous and most fair,' which, as it may be used, or an anagram upon each name, might be very pretty." Noticing soon afterwards the jewels worn by the celebrated Miss Stewart, subsequently Duchess of Richmond, he writes: "The Duke of York, being once her Valentine, did give her a jewel of about eight hundred pounds; and my Lord Mandeville, her Valentine this year, a ring of about three hundred pounds." These presents were probably given to relieve the obligation

under which the being drawn as Valentine had placed the donors.

Shakespeare, Chaucer, Drayton, and Donne, all refer to this festival, but none by a line which would infer that in their day it was in any respect similar to the anniversary it became after cheap postage enabled anyone to gratify his or her longing in this direction. The drawing of Valentines was at this period the only form it took. In Drayton's day ladies, single or married, could be drawn, though, it ought to be added, the selection entailed nothing more serious than certain gifts from the gentleman drawing them, as is mentioned in the quotation from Pepys's Diary.

Hone, in his "Commonplace Book," records that he was in a rural village in Scotland on a fourteenth of February, whither he had, in company with a friend, wandered and lost his way. In this predicament they knocked at the door of a modest mansion and asked for shelter. He proceeds: "The good man heard our story, welcomed us to a seat beside the blazing fire of wood and turf, and appeared delighted with our coming. We found ourselves in the house of rendezvous for the lads and lasses of a neighbouring village to celebrate St. Valentine's Eve. Our entrance had damped the pleasantry, and inquisitive eyes were directed towards us. It was our business to become familiar with our new acquaintances, and the pastimes were renewed. Our sudden appearance had disturbed the progress of the village schoolmaster, who had finished writing on small slips of paper the names of each of the blooming lasses of the village. Each lad had dictated the name of her he loved; these precious slips of paper were now put into a bag and well mixed together, and each youth drew out a ticket, with hope that it might, and fear lest it should not, be the name of his sweetheart. This was repeated three times; the third time was the conclusion of the sport. Some drew beloved names the third time with rapturous joy, others drew names of certain respectable widows and old ladies of the village, introduced by the art of the schoolmaster, and the victims mourned their unpitied derided sufferings. After the lasses the names of the young men were written and drawn by the girls in the same way, and a threefold success was secretly hailed as a suretyship of bearing the name of the fortunate youth. The drawing of this lottery was succeeded by

the essence of the amusement, for the Valentines were to be 'relieved.' The relieving of the Valentines was a scene of high amusement. Each young man had a right to kiss the young girl whose name he drew, and at the same time to deliver up to her the slip of paper. The mirth of this ceremony was excessive. Those who were drawn and were not present, were to be relieved with a gift of inconsiderable value, as a token of regard."

In Derbyshire farm-houses, on the morning of this day, a custom once prevailed for girls to peep through the keyholes of the doors before opening them. If fortune were kind, and they saw a cock and hen in company, the omen was so favourable that it might be taken for granted the person most interested would be married before the year was out. At Scalford, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, it was customary for the young girls of the village, on the morning of St. Valentine's Day, to visit the residents and solicit pins, intoning the following words:

Good morrow, Valentine;
All the pins and points are mine.

The residents used to procure pins for the occasion. I have not heard that such a custom ever attached to any other village, and it commenced, I should think, at the time when pins were both scarce and expensive. At many places—notably Uppingham and Great Easton—a custom still prevails of having plum-buns on St. Valentine's Day. These are called "shittles," from being the same shape as a weaver's shuttle.

"Tawnay" breaking was also formerly carried on at Great Easton or its immediate locality. It was customary also there to make presents on the day, and little girls still go a-begging. An old nursery rhyme says:

Good morrow, Valentine,
Set your hopper down by mine.

The hopper is that in which the husbandman carries his seed when sowing corn.

At Caldecott, it was the custom to make and distribute plum-cakes on this day.

At Swaffham, in Norfolk, it was customary to send Valentines on the eve of this day. At a convenient opportunity the door was slyly opened, and the Valentine, attached to an apple or an orange, thrown in. A loud rap was then given, and the amateur postman took to his heels. A further refinement of the fun, partaking of a First of April joke, was practised by

chalking a white imitation of a letter on a door-step, which some unwary maiden might stoop to pick up.

A writer in a weekly paper says: "The nicest and most sensible way of keeping the festival of St. Valentine is that practised at Norwich. It is observed there as a time of general giving and receiving of gifts, and, indeed, to some extent takes the place of Christmas in this respect. As soon as it gets dark on St. Valentine's Eve, the inmates of the house are roused by a tremendous knock at the front door. On its being opened a large parcel is seen lying on the step, which is at once picked up and carried in. It is directed in an unrecognised scrawl to the eldest girl, and is labelled perhaps, 'With Wallentine's lov,' evidently by someone who does not know how to spell. Wrapper after wrapper is taken off, until the table is covered with brown paper and string, and then a little box, containing some pretty article of jewellery, is reached, which the young lady at once declares is from 'father.' So the fun goes on for the whole night—first back, then front, door is assailed."

Sometimes more comical presents are sent. A gentleman made his wife a present of a feather bed, and didn't the big man enjoy the joke as he stood in the shadow outside and watched his little wife trying to tug the great unwieldy thing into the hall?

Also, surprises too may happen when a person ignorant of the custom makes a call on the evening. Such a one, just arrived in the city, on knocking at the house of a friend, was startled by the door flying open very suddenly and a young lady bending down and seizing his legs. That must have been an embarrassing surprise to both parties.

In some districts the village children go about in companies singing:

Good morrow, Valentine!
First it's yours and then it's mine,
So please give me a Valentine.

This triplet is varied in other places as follows:

Good morrow, Valentine,
Curl your locks as I do mine,
Two before and one behind.

Shakespeare alludes to the belief in St. Valentine's love powers by making Ophelia sing:

"Good morrow! 'tis Valentine's Day,
All in the morning betime,
And I, a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

The real ceremony, however, of this day,

was with our ancestors, the drawing of the lottery, which was driven out on the introduction of the penny post. The names of a select number of one sex were, by an equal number of the other, put into some bowl or vessel, after which everyone drew a name, which for the present was called his Valentine, and was looked upon as a good omen of their eventually becoming man and wife. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines were expected to give balls and treats to their mistresses, and wear their billets somewhere about their person. These imaginary engagements often led to real ones, as for a whole year the bachelor remained bound to the service of his Valentine; and thus, what was begun in sport ended frequently in earnest. In some places it is the custom for children to catch each other for Valentines; and if there are elderly persons in the family who are likely to prove liberal, great care is taken to catch them. The mode of catching is by saying, "Good morrow, Valentine," and if they can repeat this before they are spoken to, they are rewarded with a small gift. It must, however, be done before sunrise, otherwise, instead of a reward, they are told they are sunburnt, and are sent away in disgrace.

The following is from the pen of a "Miss," in the "Connoisseur," a series of essays published from 1754 to 1756. "Last Friday was Valentine's Day, and the night before I got five bay leaves, and pinned four of them to the four corners of my pillow, and the fifth to the middle; and then, if I dreamt of my sweetheart, Betty said we should be married before the year was out. But to make it more sure I boiled an egg hard, and took out the yolk, and filled it with salt; and when I went to bed ate it, shell and all, without speaking or drinking after it. We also wrote our lovers' names on bits of paper, and rolled them up in clay, and put them into water; and the first that rose up was to be our Valentine. Would you think it? Mr. Blossom was my man. I lay a-bed and shut my eyes all the morning, till he came to our house, for I would not have seen another man before him for all the world."

A poet in the "British Apollo" asks:

Why's Valentine a day to choose
A mistress, and our freedom lose?
May I my reason interpose,
The question with an answer close?
To imitate we have a mind,
And couple like the winged kind.

The Princess Elizabeth of England was

married on the fourteenth of February, 1614, to Frederick, Count Palatine of the Rhine, thus founding our present line of sovereigns. In reference to this event Donne, the poet of the day, wrote:

Hail, Bishop Valentine! whose day this is;
All the air is thy diocese,
And all the chirping choristers
And other birds are thy parishoners;
Thou marryest every year
The lyric lark, and the grave whispering dove;
The sparrow that neglects his life for love,
The household bird with the red stomacher;
Thou mak'st the blackbird speed as soon
As doth the goldfinch or the halcyon—
This day more cheerfully than ever shine,
This day, which might inflame thyself, old Valentine.

In Western Europe, during the festival of Saint or Angel Isendarmey, the especial guardian of the fair sex, which, strangely enough, occurred on the fourteenth of February, maidens might, without being considered indelicate, pay their addresses to whomsoever they pleased, and as the Saint or Angel was believed to regard all contracts entered into during the festival with particular favour, it need hardly be stated that many—very many—engagements and marriages resulted therefrom. It would almost appear that the observance of the day has now reached its highest pitch, the exception being not to send Valentines to the loved ones. One change, however, is gradually taking place: whereas the Valentine was originally a written piece of verse or a compliment, next a gaudy print, afterwards a mass of lace-work and scented paper, it is now developing with amazing rapidity into an article of use or real ornament—chiefly the former. I do not know who is the author, but I picked up a newspaper cutting not long since which fairly represents my own views. The writer says:

I think if old Saint Valentine but knew
The way his fête day now's commemorated;
And if the strange productions met his view
That fill our picture shops, at any rate he'd
Be much amused, and no doubt marvel too,
At fame he surely scarce anticipated—
A fame as great as any of the sages
Of Greece, or Rome, or of the Middle Ages.

I wonder what his saintship had to do
With flaming hearts, or with a cooing dove,
With little bows and arrows, and the true
Entangled lovers' knots (fit type of love);
With chubby flying Cupids, peeping through
The leaves of roses or through clouds above,
Daintily sketched on paper with lace edges,
To be, perhaps, of timid love the pledges?

Long live thy memory, great Saint Valentine,
Still lend thy ancient name to lovers' lays,
And with thy spirit animate each line;
And still may poets celebrate thy praise,
And yearly help to make that name of thine
"Familiar in our mouths," as Shakespeare says,
As "Household Words." This wish is loyal, too,
For Valentines increase the revenue.

Lamb, in his "Essays of Elia," thus refers to this day of universal love. "Hail to thy returning festival, old Bishop Valentine! Great immortal go between! Who and what manner of person art thou? Art thou but a name, typifying the restless principle which impels poor humans to seek perfection in union? or wert thou indeed a mortal prelate, with thy tippet and thy rochet, thy apron on, and decent lawn sleeves? Mysterious personage! like unto thee, assuredly there is no other mitred father in the calendar; not Jerome, nor Ambrose, nor Cyril; nor the consigner of undipped infants to eternal torments, Austin, whom all mothers hate; nor he who hated all mothers, Origen; nor Bishop Bull; nor Archbishop Parker; nor Whitgift. Thou comest attended with thousands and ten thousands of little loves, and the air is

Brush'd with the kiss of nestling wings.

Singing Cupids are thy choristers and thy preceptors; and instead of the crozier the mystical arrow is borne before thee. In other words this is the day on which those charming little missives, yclept Valentines, cross and intercross each other at every street and turning. . . .

"Not many sounds in life—and I include all urban and rural sounds—exceed in interest the knock at the door. It 'gives a very echo to the throne where Hope is seated.' But its issues seldom answer to this oracle within. It is so seldom that just the person we want to see comes. But of all the clamorous visitations the welcomest in expectation is the sound that ushers in, or seems to usher in, a Valentine. As the raven himself was hoarse that announced the fatal entrance of Duncan, so the knock of the postman on this day is light, airy, confident, and befitting one that bringeth good tidings. It is less mechanical than on other days. You will say, 'This is not the post, I am sure.' Visions of Love, of Cupids, of Hymens!—delightful, eternal commonplaces, which, having been, will always be; which no schoolboy or schoolman can write away; having your irreversible throne in the fancy and affections. What are your transports when the happy maiden, opening with careful fingers, careful not to break the emblematical seal, bursts upon the sight of some well-designed allegory, some type, some youthful fancy, not without verses:

Lovers all,
A madrigal,

or some such device, not over abundant in sense—young love disclaims it—and not quite silly; something between wind and water, a chorus where the sheep might almost join the shepherd, as they did, or, as I apprehend they did, in Arcadia . . . 'Good morrow to my Valentine,' sings poor Ophelia; and no better wish, but with better auspices, we wish to all faithful lovers, who are not too wise to despise old legends, but are content to rank themselves humble diocesans of old Bishop Valentine and his true Church."

An amusing specimen of the Valentine of fifty years ago has been preserved in the form of a verse sent by a young man of the name of Cook to his sweetheart, who rejoiced in the name of Crozier:

I would I were a Bishop,
The reason you may guess;
For if a Bishop I could be,
A Crozier I'd possess.

The young lady, equally witty with him she had enslaved, promptly retorted that she did

Not wish your plan success;
The reason you may see;
For though a Crozier you'd possess,
I but a Cook should be.

HOW CANARIES CAME TO SAINT ANDREASBERG.*

It is a great thing with those who pique themselves on race to say that they "came over with the Conqueror." The Canary birds can claim a considerable antiquity, and also came over with the Conqueror, though not Norman William. The first hint that can be found in Europe of the forbears of our yellow favourites, who "discourse sweet music" to us winter and summer alike, is in Spain, where we are told that, in 1478, some specimens were brought by Henry the Navigator, on his return from one of his voyages, during which he had landed at the Canary Islands. Though very unlike most of the canaries we now see in cages (for in colour they rather resembled the linnnet, a gray shading into green on the breast), they soon were sought after for their song, and high prices were paid for them by the Spanish ladies. The Spanish bird-fanciers soon began to breed from them; and as only the cocks, or singing birds, were for some time brought to Europe they now and then conveyed some

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, vol. xxxix., p. 11.

of the cocks to the Canary Islands to act as decoys for the female birds. It is said that these travelled birds were very healthy. The Spaniards were carefully reticent about their Canary song-bird; and for a long period canaries were to be had only from Spain at high prices.

In 1622 a book was written about them, and published in Rome, and in it we read that accident, and not generosity, put an end to this monopoly. A ship that carried a consignment of canaries on board, was wrecked on the Italian coast, and many of the birds escaping flew to the Island of Elba, where the climate suited them very well, and they bred and flourished. The Italians soon found this out, and were so eager for the birds that, in the course of some years, they were exterminated there; but not till the Italians had produced some good breeds. As the Italians were not quite so secretive as the Spaniards, the people in the Tyrol soon shared the knowledge, and passed it on to the Germans and other Northern nations.

In the seventeenth century the mining population at Imst, in Oberinntal, were specially noted for their cleverness and skill in training the canary, and as, fortunately, the demand grew with the increase of the supply, most of the inhabitants (not being very liberally paid for mining-work) devoted themselves, in their spare time, to the songsters. Guilds were, in course of time, formed to organise and extend the traffic. The members subscribed so much, and the common fund was devoted to procuring the very finest birds from distant parts. Certain of the men were chosen as deputies or representatives to travel abroad and sell the birds; and year after year they went forth, arrayed in their gay costumes, with the well-trained young birds, in large baskets, expressly made for the purpose, on their shoulders. In course of time, they travelled throughout Germany, and, by-and-by, extended their journeys to France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland; venturing at last even into Russia, Turkey, Syria, and Armenia.

For nearly a century this went on; and, if in Imst the highest possible song-powers of the bird were not developed, much was done to increase his beauty of form, of plumage, of colour, though, as yet, it must be confessed, our familiar yellow bird was not in existence. That was a work of time and care, and illustrates well Mr. Darwin's doctrine of selection, as we shall soon see.

The title of "Tyrolese bird," often given to the canary, has thus a definite historical meaning. But there were bad as well as good canary years; and, unfortunately, a series of bad canary years came along with a sudden and almost total failure of the mining at Imst. This led to many changes, and finally to a movement of the bulk of the population of Imst to Saint Andreasberg in the Harz, where mining was then actively carried on. The trainers brought their birds with them, and continued, as at Imst, to carry on their training in their spare time. Soon it was in many ways improved, and more attention devoted to the development of the song-power. Difficulties, so far as the canary-training was concerned, arose in unexpected ways, and, curiously enough, from a strong love of birds in the native Saint Andreasbergers. They were enthusiastic in their love of finches and thrushes. There was hardly a house in the town, we learn, but had its wicker cage at the door with a finch or thrush in it. The canary, like all fine singers, is very imitative of the songs of other birds it may hear, when young and under training; and it was not desirable that they should hear or follow the notes of finches or thrushes. This made the work of the canary-trainers difficult, and demanded care. But it also stimulated thought, and suggested new methods. Out of every disadvantage profit is born to perseverance and skill. The canary-trainers had now to isolate their birds more and more; and in this isolation were led more and more to a study of individual character and temperament, and thus learned some of the secrets of the craft which, for so long a period, has made them pre-eminent in their strange industry. They found out, not only how to guard their birds from coarser notes, but how to inspire them to higher efforts by emulation and the force of trained example, and by the use of darkened bowers or boxes during a special period of confinement, in which the trainer was seldom for an hour absent from them, night or day. It was in this way that canary-breeding began in Saint Andreasberg, and what was begun so long ago is carried on to this day, though not so much money is now made, canaries being carefully bred in other places in Germany.

It was thus from the Tyrolese bird, further trained in the Harz, that the Germans, the Belgians, the Dutch, and the English created the leading distinct breeds, which are now known the world

over, with all their perplexing varieties, which are not so well known. Each nation has acted on a different point of the bird. The Dutch altered chiefly the figure and developed tufty lines of feathers (and of this breed the Parisians were at one time so fond that they have been miscalled "Parisian canaries"); the Belgians developed the shoulder peculiarity, or as some (not, perhaps, experienced fanciers) would call it, deformity, and have produced what have been called "Undertakers"; the English have principally studied the colour; and to the Germans is due the credit of carrying the song-training to the point of science. England has the credit of the largest, longest, and heaviest birds. The Norwich crested canaries are very quaint, and the Norwich even-marked, with what are called "spectacle eye marks," or dark patches round the eyes, are very beautiful; while the Manchester Coppy, with his lovely crest on the head, and thicker, longer tuft over the beak, is perhaps the most magnificent. The Lizards, again, dark-green on the back, with brilliant spangles from the neck, and growing larger as they descend, are the richest and most varied in colour; and the London Fancy, all yellow save some of its wing and tail feathers, which are black, is perhaps the neatest and most compact. But individual taste has much to do with any judgement on these points.

With regard to the yellow colour, and its testimony to Mr. Darwin's theory, it is said that, after domestication in Belgium, Germany, and England (a point with which temperature or climate may have had something to do), the birds threw up on the feathers small patches of yellow of lighter colour; and by carefully matching those birds that had the largest number of these patches, the breeders at length, and after a considerable period, succeeded in obtaining bright and uniform yellow colour, more closely resembling what are called the "clear" birds of to-day. But the application of the phrase, "canary-colour," to indicate a special shade of yellow, though general, is not justified by the facts. Canaries of pure breed are to be found of many colours. Whole breeds are green; and, by feeding on pepper and other seeds, canaries have been produced of cinnamon, and coffee colour, and even of red; and, in the Lizard variety, as we have seen, the bird, though yellow in the crown, is elsewhere shaded and spangled in the most lovely manner.

But pure yellow birds had been produced before the beginning of the eighteenth century, for it was the custom of ladies of fashion, on receiving visitors, to have the yellow bird perched on the left arm; and we have good evidence of this in the fact that some of them had their portraits painted in this manner by artists of note.

The rapidly-increasing demand for the bird, and the competition which has thus been excited, have done not a little to injure the training. It has become less a matter of pastime and pleasure and more of a mere trade. The birds are now turned out wholesale—treated in mass, without the nice regard to individual traits and possibilities, which alone can produce the best results. And in St. Andreasberg (the "Canary Mecca," as it has been called, which every lover of the canary must visit once at least in his lifetime) we are sorry to say this is already too much the case, though nowhere else will so many fine stocks be found within so limited a space.

Good birds from the Harz race are now produced in Berlin, in Hanover, and on the Rhine, and the only means by which the St. Andreasbergers can maintain their pre-eminence, is to go back to their old ways and traditions. A select few of their trainers have fortunately remained faithful to these.

The St. Andreasberg trainers, of the best days, have the merit of having developed to its highest pitch the natural song of the bird. They dispensed with all artificial aids like bird-organs or pipes, such as have sometimes been brought into use elsewhere, only with the result of clumsy imitation. Only by such methods of isolation, dark bowers, strict individual treatment, could the song of the canary have become so refined and rich, and still have retained its natural freshness and spontaneity. On their method, the young birds, according to their age and capacity, were brought into proximity with birds of higher and higher culture, and heard only their song from day to day, till they formed themselves upon it.

It is astonishing how persevering and devoted these young birds are. When they hear any song fresh and new to them, they listen closely, and then endeavour to reproduce it, trying again and again till they succeed. It is part of the business of the trainer—and a most important part too—to remove any bird that shows any fault in temper or in voice; and

the different characters to be found among canary birds are just as marked and contrasted as among human beings: some being calm and self-controlled, and others restless, irritable, and apt to become loud and screechy in voice. These, when they show possibilities, need to be much longer kept in the dark chamber than others, and demand less indulgence in egg diet and, indeed, in stimulating food of any kind; and must even be allowed, in any circumstances, less of the strong sunlight, and not suddenly exposed to it.

From St. Andreasberg about twenty thousand singing cocks are exported per annum, representing an income of two hundred thousand marks, or about ten thousand pounds, and as the place has between three and four thousand inhabitants, it is evident that canary-training is not a source of very large revenue to a good many persons there. Many nations that love the canary do not care to breed and train him, and there is no doubt that the demand will increase instead of falling off. It may be mentioned, however, that the Chinese and Japanese, with their usual enterprise and readiness for work of this kind, have made a beginning, and may possibly do something noticeable by-and-by. Even the nations which have gained a speciality for breeding, still import largely from Germany. That the above statements are correct, is proved by the following figures: in 1882, singing canary cocks were imported from Germany to New York, one hundred and twenty thousand; to South America, ten thousand five hundred; to Australia, five thousand six hundred; to South Africa, three thousand; to France, thirty thousand; to Belgium, thirty thousand; to England, thirty thousand; to Russia, thirty thousand; to Austria, thirty thousand. America, which has not yet shown any tac for training or love for it, is by far the largest customer; and it is a fact that there the canary bird is now as necessary an adjunct to the log hut as to the drawing-room of the mansion in town or country.

No doubt many will be surprised to learn that a trade so extensive in these birds has existed for so long a time—for centuries indeed; and it may equally surprise them to know that some of our favourite English breeds—such as the London Fancy, the Lizard, the Norwich Clear, and others—have been known for so long a period that no detail of their introduction or first appearance can be found.

In a work dated 1709 as many as twenty-eight varieties are named, comprising nearly all those known at the present time. The love of the canary is thus very old; and there is no doubt that it is growing—one good fashion, at least, in which we follow our forefathers. In this conviction we may be permitted to quote the following beautiful stanzas from the pen of Robert Leighton, a fine poet, who died too young:

Overhead in the lattice high
Our little golden songster hung,
Singing, piping merrily,
With dulcet throat and clipping tongue;
Singing from the peep of morning
To the evening's closing eye.
When the sun in blue was burning,
Or when clouds shut out the sky:
Foul or fair, morn, eve, or noon,
Its little pipe was still in tone.

Its breast was filled with fairy shells
That gave sweet echo to its note,
And strings of tiny silver bells
Rang with the pulsings of its throat;
Song all through its restless frame,
Its very limbs were warbling strings:
I well believe that music came
E'en from the tipplings of its wings;
Piping early, late and long,
Mad with joy and drunk with song,
Oh, welcome to thy little store,
Thy song repays it o'er and o'er.

THE SHEPHERD OF THE SALT LAKE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

THE mulga ridges round the Salt Lake—before so silent—resounded with the ring of the axe, the thud of the mawl, the metallic clink of hammered wedges, and the dull grating of the cross cut saw. Fallen trees marked the projected line of fencing; then the square post-holes, dug out at regular intervals, showed a further stage of progress; and then the short posts themselves sprang into existence in a long straight line, which every day was added to and lengthened.

During two months of hot summer weather the work was carried on bravely, and Scotty's solitude was shared by the fencers and the mother and child. The long summer days, odorous with the breath of the hops and wattle-blossom fled by; the mulga ridges lost their green, and assumed a sober brown hue more in harmony with the dark red soil; the dark-hued mulga trees drooped list-

lessly before the remorseless heat; the giant box-trees exuded a dark crimson gum, that hung in semi-transparent drops like clots of thickened blood; and still the white tent of the fencers and the hut of the shepherd stood near together by the edge of the Salt Lake.

And the long days had not fled by without bringing other changes in their train. To the lonely life of poor old Scotty they brought a fresh interest—a new experience. He learned to love the little being, who had come and awakened him by her childish presence and her young grief from his long lethargy. He came to love the sound of her voice, the sight of her thin figure, the touch of her hand. And, strange to say, the little girl returned his liking. She was never tired of wandering with him behind the straggling flock, talking in a quaint way to the quiet sheep, who grew to know her. Oftentimes she would pass the day with her father and Larry at their work; but she did not like the noise of the chopping and hammering. It made her head ache, and she was always glad to get away from it. She liked watching her father dig the square post-holes, and passed many an hour counting the mulga-posts and taking long glances over their tops to see if they were quite in a straight line. She liked being with her mother, too, when she did not make her do lessons, and when she was not ill. But it was always one thing or the other.

When her mother was well enough, she would invariably set her to spelling and reading; and then, when she was ill, and lying in bed, it was so dull in the tent, little Lizzie was always glad to get out into the fresh odorous air. Yes, she liked best of all to accompany old Scotty in his slow wanderings with his flock, resting with him in the shade, talking to the sheep, listening to his rambling stories, which she would hardly understand, but which exercised a strange fascination over her, for they were all of the old convict days. That was what she liked best, for they were days full of novel experiences for her. At first, aroused by the new element that had entered into his life, the old shepherd had thrown off, in some measure, the apathy and supineness that characterised him. In his companionship with the little girl he became more animated than he had been for years. He tried to amuse her to the best of his powers. He puzzled his failing memory for recollections of past experiences to tell her; he got her bush

flowers and pretty heaths; dug up edible roots for her; took her to where quandongs and chucky-chuckies grew, and helped her to fill her apron with the priceless fruits. He had acquired, during former years of his lonely life, something more than an ordinary skill in carving with his clasp-knife, and this he returned to, after many years of disuse, cutting out for her all manner of curious toys and knick-knacks. He even deftly carved the quandong stones and made a necklace of them for her—a task of the utmost delicacy, that took him almost a month to accomplish. It was no wonder little Lizzie liked being with Scotty and the sheep. Nobody was so kind to her as the old shepherd; nobody knew how to amuse her so well.

And so the days fled, and the golden wattle and the hop blossoms began to fall, breaking out a sweeter fragrance in dying; and the peppermint trees, and the resinous pines, and the bleaching gum leaves, loaded the summer air with a pungent redolence. The spicy air of the mulga ridges had brought something like a flush of health to little Lizzie's pale cheeks during those two months; the evening breezes, sweeping across the Salt Lake, and laden with its saline emanations, had not carried a blight with them, but had strengthened the weakly child and benefited her.

"I'm not frightened of the Salt Lake now," she said one day to old Scotty, when both were reposing under a clump of emu-bush near its edge, idly watching the camping sheep. "I don't think there's a blight on it now. Perhaps it's gone away."

"No, no," he answered, shaking his head. "It's here, sure enough."

"But mother says it's making me strong."

"Aye; it did me good at first, too. But it got hold of me and broke me down afterwards."

The child looked curiously at him.

"Mother said I wasn't to believe it at all," she said, after a pause. "She says it's wicked to talk like that."

"Maybe," he answered, shaking his head a second time. "I don't know. But there's a curse on it for all that."

He gave way to the child in everything, but on that one point nothing could make him speak differently.

"I'm not frightened of it then, see," exclaimed little Lizzie. And, rising from her shady seat under the emu-bush, she ran down towards the lake.

"No, no, don't go there," he cried.

But the child shook her head merrily, and, followed by the old shepherd's dog barking joyously, walked out on to the flat expanse. A little cloud of acrid dust rose at every footstep, and she sank up to her ankles in the light, pervious soil. As she walked out further she went still deeper, and even the dog bounding ahead of her, light weight as he was, sank up to its knees in the yielding mould.

"There, you see," she said, returning breathless with the exertion, "I'm not frightened of it a bit."

"You shouldn't have done it," answered Scotty, shaking his head in a troubled way. "It won't lead to any good. You shouldn't have done it."

Towards sundown the two companions made their way back to the camp at the tail of the slowly moving flock. The sun going down at the far end of the Salt Lake cast a blinding glare over the treeless waste. The salty incrustations that spread in dirty white patches over its surface flashed crimson, as though the earth were stained with blood; the glaucous pig-weed and the darker ti-tree bushes took a strange unnatural brilliance; even the discoloured limestone rocks at the edge became sublimated by the crimson glamour. Slowly the bleating flock made its way homeward over the mulga ridges, the man and the child following with the dog at their heels. The glowing sunshine transfused the long avenues of the bush with a soft radiance; the birds and insects, rousing themselves after the heat of the day, filled the air with sound; the spicy odours distilled by the heat from tree and flower made the air languorous and heavy; from the dried herbage, crushed by the feet of the moving sheep, arose a fainter perfume.

"Oh!" sighed the child, half-unconsciously, as the white gleam of the tent was seen in the distance, "what a long, long, beautiful day! The sun's nearly down. How beautiful it all is! Oh, I wish it could go on like this for ever and ever!"

That same evening, as old Scotty sat alone at his solitary hearth, the two fencers entered the hut.

"We've just been putting little Liz to bed," said Duke. "She was that tired, happy-like, she could hardly hold her head up."

"She do enjoy herself all day long," said his mate. "It's wonderful what she nds to amuse her. She was singin' away

like a young chirrup, almost until she went off."

"Yes!" said Scotty eagerly. "She's asleep, is she?"

"Sound as a bell."

"Ah, that's it, that's it," he murmured.

"She'll be awake and bright to-morrow."

"See here, Scotty," said Duke thoughtfully. "Larry and me have come because we've something to tell you. We're goin' away."

"What? Going away?" he cried, letting his pipe fall to the ground in his sudden dismay. "No, no; you're not going to take the child. You won't take her from me."

"We must go. Leastways I must, and it's no good Larry stopping alone. My missus has been ailin' a good bit since we came here, and she's close on her confinement. I won't risk it without a doctor this time. If she'd been all right she'd have got through it well enough, but she ain't. I'm going to take her in the dray to Gidanga, where she can be attended to. It wouldn't be any good Larry stopping alone—he couldn't do much, so he's coming along."

"But the child!"

"Well, it's this way," said Duke thoughtfully. "It'll be a rough journey to the township. It must be nigh on eighty miles, and there ain't a track till we get in the river-road, you know. She's a delikit little thing is Liz, and I don't much like the idea of her havin' to rough it. We mean coming back, of course, and finishing the contract; so, seein' as you've grown so fond of her, and she having a liking for you, I thought, if you wanted her, as you might take care of her till we come back. But the missus don't like to part with her, and so we're in a bit of a taking about it."

"Leave her with me," exclaimed Scotty eagerly. "I'll take care of her. She shan't want for nothing."

"That's what I said," interjected Larry. "These mulga ridges is very healthy, and they're doing Liz a tremenjis lot of good. There's no use draggin' her to the township. It's a bad place for children, and the journey 'd knock her up. We'd be back in a month or six weeks most like, and so if Liz is willing to stop, I ses, 'Let her.'"

"Don't take her away. For Heaven's sake don't take her away," cried Scotty.

"Well, I'm for leaving her," answered Duke, "though the missus isn't. We've

been talking over it, and we made up our minds—if you were willing to take charge of the child—to leave it to little Liz herself. If she wants to stop, she can. If she wants to come with us, well then, we'll take her along."

"No, no. She must not go. I'll take care of her. No harm shall come to her. I'll look after her morning and night. See here; I'll give you this if you leave her with me," he cried, fumbling amid the blankets on the bunk. "It's all I have. But here; you shall have it all if you'll leave her."

"Put up your cheque, man," returned Duke, with rough good-nature. "I don't want it. If the child likes, she shall stop with you. I'll leave you plenty of rations for her, and you can look after our camp for us, for we'll leave the tent standing and the tools."

"Yes, yes. Only leave the child with me, and I will do anything you want."

The old shepherd passed a sleepless night. The fear of losing the child worked upon his feeble mind to such an extent, that during the whole of that warm summer night he walked restlessly to and fro in the hut in a fever of hope and fear. With the earliest streak of dawn he was out, waiting impatiently outside the tent of the fencers. An hour later Duke emerged from it.

"You're early," he said.

"The child!" exclaimed Scotty, feverishly.

"Well, I've been talking it over agen with the missus, and she agrees to leavin' Liz here if she wants to stop. So we'll just ask her."

The girl, bright and rosy from her long sleep, emerged from the tent at that moment.

"Come here, little Liz," said the father gravely, "I want to ask you something. Mother and me's going away for a time—going a long way all through the bush. Mother's ill, you know; and I'm going to take her to the doctor's. But we're coming back again soon. Would you like to go

with us, or stay here along with Scotty and the sheep?"

Lizzie's glance wandered from her father's face to the old shepherd. He stood feverishly, tremblingly expectant of the coming answer, with such a look of entreaty in his eyes that her gaze was for the moment arrested. He seemed about to speak, but no sound came from him, only his lips moved convulsively. The child's glance wandered from the shepherd's face to the golden wattle gleaming in the early sunlight, and the hops on their pendulous branches waving a mute greeting. The sheep camped in one corner of the bush yards attracted her attention for a moment, but her gaze wandered away to the park-like avenues of graceful mulga trees to the bright green clumps of emu and apple bush, to the dark green of the pines and tall peppermint trees, and to the red mulga ridges. At last her wandering glance rested on the Salt Lake—silent, lifeless, gleaming white and burnished. She gazed at it for a moment in silence, and then she said with strange quietness:

"I'd sooner stay by the Salt Lake, father."

The next day the fencers took their departure, leaving little Lizzie under Scotty's care. Early in the morning the two horses were harnessed to the dray, one in the lead, one between the shafts. Mother and father embraced their daughter for the last time; then Larry cracked his long whip lustily, the harness strained, the heavy wheels creaked slowly round, and Scotty and his little charge were left to the solitude of the Salt Lake.

"Oh, mother! mother!" sobbed Lizzie, as the dray moved off, burying her face in her hands. "I wish I'd gone too."

"No, no," said Scotty, holding her hand tight in his, "you will stop with me and the sheep. We shall be so happy together. And they'll be back soon—very soon." But under his beard he muttered to himself, "She couldn't go. No, no; the Salt Lake has got her the same as me. She can't get away from it."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 951. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER VIII. "IT IS TOO LATE!"

In the little parlour, in solemn conclave, sat Sister Maria, the old priest Father Joseph, and Gretchen's two relatives. Above, locked in her own little chamber, the girl lay white and stunned, and full of terrible dread.

Her thoughts could scarce keep pace with the rapid march of events, so much had happened since that morning, when her childish feet had hastened to meet her lover. So much—ah! indeed, so much. The whole current of her life was changed, and this stunned, pale, terrified girl was in no way like the fair childish maiden who had left that room with blithesome heart and step but a few brief hours before.

Even surly Lisschen looked compassionately at her as she unlocked the door, and brought in a tray containing only the bread and water prescribed as penance by Sister Maria.

"They say you are to go to the Convent to-morrow," whispered the old woman. "What is to be done?"

"Oh, Lisschen!" the words fell in terror from the girl's pale lips. It seemed as if a ruthless hand had closed the gates of Paradise upon her, after one brief glimpse of its beautiful promises.

"I dare not stop, or they will suspect me," said the old woman hurriedly. "Thou must set thy wits to work. Tut—tut—all women are sharp enough when they love. Do not look so frightened. I will see the man, and tell him. There is still to-night."

"You will come again. You will tell me," implored the girl.

"Yes, yes; be sure of that. Hush, someone is coming."

Some one! A grave, sombre figure, with a face whose stony calm seemed to-day to bear a look of repressed anguish more terrible than any outcry of physical suffering. What was it that made Gretchen shiver and turn white with sickening fear as that stony face, those burning eyes, looked at her now?

Was it memory, or dread, or that awakening to the tragedies beneath life's surface, that some faces teach us? She could not tell. She could not even have put her feelings into any words, or have expressed that wild and passionate longing which surged through her heart, and prompted her to throw herself down at those feet, crying only, "save me, pity me, pardon me, for sake of your own youth—your own sufferings!"

Had she done so, the whole current of her life might have been changed. Had she done so, Nature might for once have broken through that icy calm, and in one moment of common weakness those two hearts might have met on one common ground of sympathy and comprehension. Had she done so—ah! who is to know the supreme moment when Fate stands beside us for the good or ill of all our future?

That moment came to Gretchen then. Unknowingly, she passed it by. The old dread and shrinking usurped the place of that strange impulse. It would come to her never, never again, save in the memory of some wild regret—save in that refrain to the broken music of life's song, "could I have known—could I have known!"

The cold, measured tones of the voice she knew broke in upon those thronging

thoughts, harsher than its wont because of the new pain that throbbed in an old and unhealed wound—but what should the child know of that?

"It were better you were dead than that I should have to speak of you as it is my duty to speak—better you were dead than that I should have to tell you the history of your mother. Yet as a warning to yourself, as a voice that from some buried past of infamy and shame speaks out its misery and regret, so would I speak her story in your ears—for like the hand of doom her fate points the way to yours, since neither ignorance, nor warning, nor watchfulness, nor prayers, can keep you in the innocence of childhood any more."

She paused as if for strength. Her hands were clasped against her heart, as if to still some inward pain that held there its seat of suffering.

Gretchen looked at her wide-eyed and trembling, with a terror the like of which she had never known.

The low, cold voice steadied itself; the eyes, pain-filled and tragic with such woe as the girl's young heart could not even dimly conceive, looked back at her once more.

"Your mother was young and fair, and innocent as yourself, when Fate threw across her path the man who was her life's curse. The time will come when you will know the meaning of my words, and remember that the warning your mother would not hear is uttered in your ears for your safety. Orphaned and disgraced your life has been and will be, not for fault of yours, but for that mother whom not even your love could console. There is that upon your life which sets you apart from all the honour and glory of womanhood. It is your penance for her, as it was hers for you. There is a gulf between you and the women whom you see around you. The shadows and sorrows that are your birth-right can best be hidden under the secrecy and silence, the penitence and prayers, that are the daily religion of all wounded hearts and sorrowful lives. You know the life for which you were destined—you have been guilty of wanton sin—of deceit, disobedience, perjury. You can no longer be trusted to the freedom of home. Sterner and safer guardians will be yours from henceforth. That you should so have erred is a cause of deep sorrow to us all; but that you should have erred for the sake of a heretic, and one of that accursed nation whom you have been taught to

abhor, is a crime unpardonable in your grandfather's eyes and in—mine."

Her voice faltered over that last word, as if strength failed her in its utterance; but the girl's broken cry rang out in piteous entreaty, and nerved her once again for the task that lay before her.

"It is my father's nation," she cried; "and, though he is nothing to me but a shadow, I cannot hate his race, and it is from one of that race that I have first received love, or pity, or kindness. I cannot forget that."

"Your father!" fell short and sharp, and with the bitterest contempt that ever rang in spoken words from those proud lips. "Your father!—he is your disgrace. Do not speak of him. Your father! It were better you were in your coffin now than living to claim kinship with a traitor and a coward. But you do not know"—her voice sank into a wail—"no, thank Heaven, you do not know. It is only your mother, your poor, betrayed, unhappy mother . . . and she is dead; and you live; and the shadow of her fate is close upon your own. Ah, child! be warned; be warned in time. There is no help or hope for a woman who listens to a man's vows of love and—believes. They are our foes; our tyrants; our curse. It is from your mother's fate that I would have saved you; that I tried to save you. Child, child, in Heaven's name don't tell me it is too late!"

The anguish and entreaty of her voice startled Gretchen into a new wonder. Never had the cold, proud, passive woman spoken to her with such a voice, looked at her with such a face!

She rose slowly to her feet. Her eyes sank; the quick breath heaved her breast.

"Yes," she said very low, and trembling greatly, "it is—too late!"

A moment's silence, filled only by the beat of throbbing hearts. Then there was a gasp, a cry that, like the very soul and essence of undying pain, broke forth in one long moan.

Ere Gretchen's call of terror echoed it, the proud figure swayed, and fell face downwards on the chamber floor as lifeless as the dead on whom her lips had called.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I. "LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM."

THE Continental Express was dashing along over the dull, flat marshy country towards the lagoon bridge that connects Venice with the mainland.

To untravelled eyes, that long wide span of dull, smooth water, from which, as by enchantment suddenly rise the islands and towers, and palaces of the once famous Queen of the Adriatic, is a veritable fairy scene. Two such eyes looked at it now from out the window of a coupé. The sun had not yet risen; but over the quiet waters lay a pale, silvery haze that gradually melted into a flood of translucent gold.

From amidst this transforming orb a glowing ball of fire shot suddenly forth and mirrored itself in the rippleless calm of that glassy sea, and, as if by magic, the water changed and glowed, and broke into one radiant glimmering sheet of colour that spread further and further, till the watching eyes grew dazzled at its splendour.

Here and there a red sail, or a speck of white, or the black outline of a gondola or "barca" gleamed suddenly forth as the silvery mist was swept away, and the golden beams shot downwards in a million points of light that radiated from one great centre. The train rushed swiftly on, and the specks of fluttered canvas melted softly into distance till they looked no bigger than a bird's wing that blends itself into the light of sea and sky, and so vanishes, and is lost.

There broke a low cry—like a child's note of wonder from the girl who watched the scene. She turned to her companion. "Oh! but it is lovely—it is not like earth at all. It is as one dreams that Paradise will be!"

"It shall be Paradise for us," came the answer low and deep, as with the passion that stirs the heart and gives an eloquence to even simple words; "a Paradise that never serpent shall disturb—nor alien voices jar. Gretchen—sweetheart, come here and tell me you are happy."

"Oh! so happy," came from the trembling lips as she stole to his side, and nestled there with the sweetest, shyest grace that ever Love lent to woman. "So happy, that I wonder if I have ever—lived—till now."

"That is as it should be," he answered fondly. "And no one can drag you from me now, so we have nothing more to fear."

"I wonder if they are still angry?" said the girl sorrowfully. "Oh, I hope not; for now that I am so happy I cannot bear to think anyone else is sad—or troubled—or in grief. You posted my letter, Neale, from Vienna?"

"Yes, love, and told them that we were off to England and that I had married you, and intended to take better care of you than the Church would have done."

"Sometimes, I think," said the girl slowly and thoughtfully, "that perhaps aunt did care for me a little. She seemed so strangely moved that day when she spoke to me; but then," she added brightly, "she declared that all men were false, and evil, and cruel; and I know she was not right, though of course she did not know you; and I could not expect her to think you were different."

He bent down and kissed the lovely lips that still were shy of kisses, and rarely gave them back. "She was a hard and cruel woman, or she would never have wished to consign you to a living grave. Do not let us talk of these people, sweetheart. You have done with them now."

"Yes," said the girl softly; "still—one day, if you do not mind very much, and when we have been married some time, you know, I should like to go back and see them, and tell them I bear them no ill-will, and that I am sorry I left them so abruptly and secretly; and that they must forgive me, for I am so happy, and you are so good. I think they would be glad to know that, even though you are English, and carried me away in such a strange manner."

"There is plenty of time to talk of going back," said Neale Kenyon hurriedly. "I have hardly had you in my care yet. Only four days—what is that? You should have no other thought or wish but of me, my little one."

"Nor have I—in my heart," answered the girl earnestly. "But it is because I am so happy that I feel a little sorry for them."

"Do not let such thoughts vex you," he entreated, "or I shall begin to think that you regret what you have done."

"You could not think that," she said simply. "For you know you are first to me always now. It seems as if you never could have been out of my life, you fill it so completely."

A brief silence followed those last words. They were nearing Venice now. From out the wide, still waters rose the magic city—shining in the morning sunlight with something of the old loveliness that now is only a long past dream. It was wrapped in silence like that of a long forgotten world. The salt scents of the marshy shores stole in through the open windows—a great bell tolled heavily in the distance and startled the two dreamers, to whom life, as yet,

was only love. "We must be nearly there," said Kenyon. "I am sure you are tired, sweetheart. Journeying all night in these rattling, jolting trains is no joke. I wonder how you manage to look so fresh and fair after it all."

For Gretchen's was that happy kind of beauty that nothing seems to disturb. Her cheeks were as softly flushed as a child's; her eyes as bright; her glorious hair only the lovelier for its loose and careless arrangement. She had removed her hat, and the cool salt wind had blown it into a thousand rings and curls around her white forehead. Certainly no newly wedded bridegroom could have wished to look upon a fairer sight—despite the discomforts of travelling.

She drew herself away now from his arms and replaced her hat, while he fastened the long rich mantle, with its border of dark fur, around the slender form. Gretchen had been hastily equipped in Vienna for the journey, and, being quite ignorant of fashionable attire, the choice and ordering had devolved upon Neale, and he had acquitted himself very creditably. A simple cloth travelling dress and a rich mantle of plush and fur with hat to match, had transformed Gretchen into quite a fashionable young woman; and, despite what the proverb says about "beauty unadorned," believe me no man or woman either is capable of being unimproved by beautiful and artistic clothing. Gretchen in her grey linen dress had been charming; but Gretchen in velvet and furs, with her golden head and rich colouring, was simply bewitching. All the more so in that she was so utterly unconscious of her own charms, thus giving to her beauty its very crown of perfection.

Meanwhile the train steamed into the great, dreary station, and Bari made his appearance in the coupé to collect wraps and baggage. Giving him the keys, and leaving him the by no means pleasant task of waiting for the Custom House examination, Kenyon led Gretchen away to where the waiting ranks of gondolas lay in rows at the station steps.

To the girl it seemed the most wonderful sight possible. Before her stretched that still, wide, gleaming expanse of water. On the opposite banks were rows and rows of mildewed, dingy palaces, fantastic with carving and frescoes, and looming in dull sombreness of faded tints over the great lagoon.

But her wonder increased as their gon-

dola shot swiftly out from the surrounding crowd, and glided in weird, fashion over the reddened waters, and under the arched bridges, and through the narrowing threads of smaller canals.

How silent it was! how hushed! how solemn! Venice looked like a city of the dead in these early hours of the spring day. Not a soul was stirring in the narrow, paved footways. The casements of the houses were still closed. The spell of sleep lay on the silent streets through which the waters softly stole; and when the gondola shot suddenly forth again into the wider current of the Grand Canal, and paused before the striped poles of the hotel landing-place, it seemed quite strange to Gretchen that any ordinary, every-day being should be there to welcome them or direct them to their rooms.

The hotel had formerly been a palace. The entrance hall was paved with varied marbles, now dull of hue and worn by tread of many feet. Carved figures, rich in colouring, stood on either side the wide staircase, and great palms and bowls of flowers were placed in the dim recesses that led into the corridors. Like one in a dream, Gretchen noted all these things, as they followed their guide into a large square chamber with shuttered casements open to the water, and through which the morning sunlight gaily streamed.

Kenyon ordered some coffee to be brought them, and then, when the man had left, crossed over to the window and threw back the half-closed shutters.

"Look!" he said; and held out his hand to draw Gretchen to his side.

She gave a little cry of delight.

The wide sweep of golden water seemed to embosom an infinitude of tiny islands, and then spread and lost itself in the deep blue sea beyond. Before them, on the opposite bank, towered the lofty cupola and sculptured façade of a great church, and to right and left were other towers and domes, mingled with the red-brown roofs of houses; the masts and sails in the harbour; the foliage of some rare garden; the dusky, gliding shapes of gondolas carrying some freight of market produce from the Lido, or some devout worshipper to early mass.

It was a wonderful scene, a scene unequalled and alone amongst all the world's beauties, but to Gretchen's amazed and inexperienced eyes it was simply enchantment.

She gazed, and gazed, and gazed, with

a delight never satiated. Her colour came and went—the pretty, pouting lips parted in a thousand breathless exclamations.

Kenyon smiled at her enthusiasm.

"I have been here before," he said. "It is some years ago. I was quite a boy, but I saw it for the first time by moonlight. That is the time; the old palazzos want the fairy spell of night to keep up one's illusion of Venice as we have heard of her."

"It seems wonderful to me," said Gretchen sadly, "that I know so little of the world, or the places in it; and," looking suddenly up at him, "I should have known nothing had it not been for—you."

A little flush hovered over her cheek. A tiny dimple peeped suddenly as she smiled back at his adoring eyes.

"I can hardly realise it yet," she said softly. "Always to be together—always to love you and know you love me. Nothing and no one to come between us, and such a beautiful perfect life before me. . . . I think sometimes I am in a dream—a long bright delicious dream, and that I shall awake to hear Sister Maria's harsh voice, and see aunt's face, so cold and calm, frowning at me."

Her eyes turned to the golden waters, the smile died off her lips, and left them pale and grave.

A shadow crossed Neale Kenyon's brow. His heart seemed to contract with the sharpness of a sudden fear:

"Don't talk of such things," he said hastily. "How often am I to tell you that you are quite safe! There will be only happy days for you now, sweetheart. 'Together,' that is the word for us to remember. We are in a city of dreams, and we will dream our own in it. There is no need to wake and remember."

"You talk," she said softly, "as poets talk."

He laughed a little. "They say all men are poets when they love. Perhaps you have made one of me. I wish I could tell you how I love you, Gretchen!"

The sweet, shy colour that he loved to see swept over the fair face. Once more her eyes turned to him instead of to the scene before them; turned and drew his own to meet their gaze, as the sun draws the flowers.

"Neale——" she began. But a sudden, sharp rap at the door startled her, and made Kenyon draw back a little from her side.

It was Bari with the luggage and the

coffee. The invaluable valet opened the boxes; handed them their cups; suggested that Madame should remove her travelling wraps, and Monsieur retire to his dressing-room for his bath and shaving-water; in fact, brought all the prose of every-day life into a region of romance and an idyll of folly.

"Do you know," whispered Gretchen softly, as she took Kenyon by the lappet of his coat when the valet had withdrawn into the adjoining chamber, "do you know, Neale, I hate Bari!"

SOME CONFESSIONS : LITERARY AND OTHERWISE

IN these days, when a father is perpetually scratching his head as he observes the rapid growth in age, stature, intelligence, and restlessness of his unconscionably numerous offspring, and posing himself with the problem of the future of the boys, it may be well if a devotee of literature give him the benefit of his experiences, in order that he may in good time put his fatherly foot upon the young hopes of his sons, and thus crush their callow aspirations, or may forewarn them impressively of the hard consequences of following the career of the pen.

It has its fascinations; that must be confessed.

Understanding the word "literature" in its largest sense, no career is so educative. In no career are the social advantages so considerable; for every reader of the writings of the man of letters becomes thereby an acquaintance of the writer, and, maybe, a friend. And in no career does a man feel such pleasure in receiving remuneration for his labours—so justly does he esteem himself entitled to such remuneration. Nevertheless, there is something of the rack in the life of the literary man; and, with all the vaunt about the delightful freedom that appertains to the literary career, in no other profession is a man such an absolute slave to his obligations.

At the age of twenty-three I cut myself adrift from my earlier life, and became a "littérateur." Hitherto I had never known what it was to want a five-pound note. I had now my future in my own hands, unaided by circumstances, and knew that it wholly depended upon my brain. I had had no training as a journalist, nor did I aspire to become a political medium between

the statesmen who drive the world and the people who, open-mouthed, are so ready to swallow whatever a newspaper writer sets before them. I pinned my destinies to literature, pure and simple.

For six months I studied and thought, tentatively. But, as the days went by and my resources lessened, the awful thought grew upon me that there was no room for such a novice as I in the world of letters. Well and good, if I were content to go into the rank and file, and obey orders for many a year to come. But as for origination—the faculty which had once seemed so strong in me, now seemed to be frightened away. Chill fears crept into my head in its place. When I was not at my books in the British Museum or elsewhere, I walked the London streets, and the sight of the thousands of harassed faces which confronted me wherever I went increased my own anxiety. In what one respect was I better than the owners of these faces? But yet I had thrown to the winds the assurance of prosperity which had been mine not a year ago, that I might teach and amuse these men and women of a troubled world, and make money at the same time! My head ached continuously with the burden of my folly and impudence, as I thought it. There was no consolation, except by recurring immediately to my work, and forgetting everything in that. I was alone, and kept my troubles to myself, of course. A Frenchman, similarly circumstanced, would have sought a comrade, if he were but a comrade in misery, and together they would have laughed, where singly they might have cried. But an Englishman has the pride of his birthright at all times. The consequence was that my isolation was every day the more thorough. I lived like one in a dream. Nothing seemed real to me, except myself and the work I had to do, but about the nature of which I knew nothing.

In this state of despairing egotism, a subject came to my mind, and for two months I worked as I had never worked before. A book was the result.

Now came my first acquaintance with the publishers. I was prepared to be treated as an intruder by these gentlemen, who have so extraordinary an influence over the lives of the reading public. I had made up my mind that alights at their hands were unavoidable. But, to my surprise, they were interested in the manuscript that I sent them—though interested in a Platonic sense only.

They thought the work was creditable; they would have liked to have been concerned in its publication; and so forth; but they did not think there was money in it, and so, "good morning." The seventh publisher, however, was kinder than the rest. He accepted the manuscript, and published it on the half-profit system.

The reviewers were civil, even complimentary. The "Academy" professed gratitude for the book; the "Athenæum" said it was a good work well done; and the "Saturday Review," after many a wholesome lash and not a few uncalled-for remarks of humiliation, ended its notice by referring to it as a pleasant and readable book. This, you will say, was fame at a stroke, and soon achieved. Maybe; but such fame is not bread, still less butter.

For a few weeks I smacked my lips over the newspapers and periodicals, and the compliments (oh, the bitter compliments!) of sceptical friends, who would not have given sixpence for the literary ability of Horace and Virgil put together. The world was really getting "couleur de rose" again. I could afford to hold up my head, methought.

But when a year had gone by from the time of my adoption of literature as a profession, and I realised that I had not earned a penny piece by my pen, serious thoughts revisited me—and no wonder.

After all, one must stoop to live, I had to confess. I would write newspaper articles of a style that should demand attention, and, while devoting to such work just the few hours per week necessary for the earning of two or three pounds weekly, I could continue my general study and schemes. Again, I was more lucky than I deserved to be. Though I kept aloof from politics, I found that my lucubrations were acceptable. For six months I wrote impressions of travel and people I had seen at a guinea the newspaper column. At the end of the time I received a letter from the Editor of the one newspaper saying that he had been much gratified by my contributions, and enclosing a cheque. He wanted no more impressions just then. And it was well, for I had really drained my memory to the dregs. As for the other paper (for I was contributing to two of them), it failed when I had begun to feel quite happy in the composition of the light "turnover" articles on "Prudence," "Poverty," "Genius," and the like, with which I favoured them. And so I sat face to face with an unpromising

future all throughout the second year of my apprenticeship.

But if I was not making money or any great amount of fame, I was little by little tutoring myself in what I pleased to call "the ethics of the literary life." I was becoming not a little cynical and heedless, and very much convinced that courage and effrontery are in literature, as in other paths of life, the chief recommendations for success. I was not at all, at any time, lachrymose like Keats; nor did I feel impelled to scoff at the world for not summoning me to a high position, at a high salary, on the strength of the one book which I had already produced. I realised, and it is a grand discovery, that though a man's self-esteem is greatly dependent upon the world's esteem, it is still more dependent upon himself. And, though I say it who should not, throughout my continued impecuniosity and uncertainty, I never failed to believe that there was something in me, if I could but know what it was.

Further reflection put me on a new tack. Everyone with whom I talked advised me to try fiction, as by far the most paying branch of literature. I knew that much, of course. Moreover, I had tried my hand at ghost stories and thrilling descriptions until now and then I fancied that I was veritably interested in my own manuscripts on re-perusing them, and that I could legitimately tremble over their harrowing or spectral problems. In the heat of a moment of peculiar self-respect, I sent a pile of nineteen stories, life-studies, and opuscles of a light kind, to a literary agent, for his criticism. His reply charmed me. "There is no doubt," he said, "that you possess great literary ability." Then followed a "but." Oh, these "buts!" Many and many a time, in the course of my literary correspondence, has this simple disjunctive conjunction been the link that has snapped, and let me down from heavenly hopes to abysmal despair and doubt. The literary agent strongly urged me to send him seventy-five pounds, and allow him to issue the manuscripts to the public in print. But no. I had determined from the outset rather to let my works accumulate on the shelves, than borrow money for their publication. I sent them to publisher after publisher until I was tired of paying postages and the cost of parcels' delivery. But I received no encouragement. There was a peculiar tone about the work that was not appreciated;

and, I may say it now, there was a little too much of my own devil-may-care mood permeating the pages. The work, in short, was not good, and nobody, save the literary agent, was in love with it. Only one of the nineteen sketches has since come into print, and I got fifteen shillings for it!

By this, I had lowered myself to starvation rations, or nearly so. I had been accustomed to pay my tailor twenty-five pounds a year. I paid him nothing at all now for eighteen months, and owed him nothing either. My humour grew tragic. Mind you, through all these petty distresses, I did not neglect work, nor did I seek resource or temporary exhilaration at the mouth of any spirit bottle; hence I was able to laugh at myself and my privations when the latter were really very annoying, and when I myself did not present a very laughable appearance. To be able to consider oneself impersonally, as it were, is a delightful gift almost peculiar to the literary life.

Well, in one of my tragic moments there came an inspiration—Write a tragedy. Many a man writes a tragedy without even feeling tragic. Do you suppose anyone knows more about tragic sentiments from general experience than yourself? I was bound to say "No" to this self-interrogation. In a trice a tragedy fit to grace the boards of the "Adelphi" flashed to my mind, and I hastened home with the precious bantling, to reflect and see what could be done with it. On the following day—such was the energy of my approval and the vigour of my conception!—I locked my door, and began at Act I, Scene 1.

Dear me! Even now I can think with pleasure of the impetuous constitutional I used to take during the time of my tragedy's evolution. I forgot my emptying purse for the nonce; forgot even that there were buttons off my coat, and that my boots wanted mending; forgot everything except the enthralled creations of my fancy. There was to be "love" of the most moving kind in my tragedy; and the fifth act was to be red with blood, and sparkle with impressive aphorisms about the superiority of virtue over vice. But as my creations began to live and move, and signify their being, they showed an aversion to murder and suicide which, on reflection, seems ingratitude of the basest kind. At the time, however, I cared nothing about that. And so eventually I wrote "Finis" on the manuscript, tied the pages together, sighed to think that I had parted for ever with such agreeable and inexpensive com-

panions, and sent the work to the manager of a theatre. It was a drama, not a tragedy.

For a few days my fatigued brain rested, and I lived on hope—that divine nourishment which is never followed by indigestion. Then came a polite demand for half a guinea from the theatre manager's secretary. After receipt of the money, the drama should be read. It was hard to part with the money; but I sent it. And in due time I received a somewhat lengthy criticism, dictated by the manager. From the nature of the criticism, and the return of the manuscript, I knew that I was not destined to go on the boards all at once. "Report on an original drama in five acts and twenty-four scenes:" this was how the paper was headed. And, after a good deal of merciless exposure of the incongruities of my men and women, and such absurd suggestions and comments as these—"a light comedy part should be introduced, and laughing writing infused;" "another walking lady is required in the cast, as your heroine could not be successfully doubled by any of the other ladies;" "the piece would be better re-written;" "the speeches are very prosy, although, on the other hand, the sentiment and argumentation is (in parts) good." After all this, the manager ended with a sugar-plum for me to make the most of—"Altogether, the drama is tame and uninteresting, but still gives promise that the author is capable of better work."

I had paid half a guinea to be told that my drama, which was intended to be a tragedy, was tame. A tame tragedy, forsooth! One might as well talk of tame fire. But so it was; and thus I had another Dead Sea apple in my mouth. I locked the drama out of sight, in company with my other manuscripts (for it irritated me to see the unappreciated work of my intellect), and returned to my books, well-nigh at my wits' end.

But the coil of one's life in youth has ever this gracious advantage over the term of one's later years—it is not monotonous. Something is for ever impending or hap-pening. There is no dead season in one's twenties, be one's disappointments ever so bitter, or one's hardships ever so trying. And so, when it came to my ears that an excellent man, whom I had never seen, but who had taken an interest in me from an early age, had died and left me a small legacy, my spirits rebounded, and I was happy again. Heaven was rewarding my

patient persistence upon the path which I had chosen to pursue: and I was grateful.

The legacy was really a very trifling one, but I soon determined to use it in what for me was a serious venture. My writings hitherto had failed. Why? Because I was young and inexperienced. I needed to see something of the world. I could not, therefore, better invest this money than in taking a trip to America; for was it not generally acknowledged that the future of the world was bound up with the movements and multiplication of our transatlantic half-brethren? But, before setting out, I devoted a couple of months to a labour, the plan of which had come upon me as suddenly as my tragedy or my legacy. This was nothing less than a full grown novel of an unconventional kind. My literary shifts were hard earned. Wisdom had taught me that the man who can apply his moods discreetly has a genuine El Dorado in his brain. I resolved to turn to account, therefore, the elation which was mine in the prospect of my travels in the States; and so, like a donkey with a bunch of hay, reasonably, but not accessibly, near to his nose, I toiled at my novel on the strength given to me by sweet expectation.

If a man be the best judge of his own work, this novel was a brilliant success. I wrote it as a tornado writes its mark on the lands it traverses—with stormy speed. I enjoyed its humour while composing it, and afterwards. When not writing its continuation, I was reading what I had written, and questioning myself whether, after all, it would be advisable to leave England in the very heat of my fame, as it were. It were better, no doubt, to stay and take the tide at the flood. And I congratulated myself again and again on having in this accidental manner struck the very vein, the working of which was so congenial to me that it could not fail to please the public also.

To oblige a friend, I read a few extracts from my novel aloud, before sending it to the publishers. My friend said the humour was to his taste; but indeed he could not well have said less.

Three weeks passed. The manuscript was with the best publishers of London. What terms, I wondered, would they offer me? But, in truth, they offered me no terms. "The novel is clever and amusing"—their reader confessed, "but," said the publishers, "he does not on the whole encourage us to undertake its publication."

A fortnight later I crossed to New York by the ship "Arizona." "Those wounds heal ill which men do give themselves," says Shakespeare. Yes: because a man can never divorce himself from himself: the injured and the injurer are of necessity in each other's society at all times. But, in going to America, I left my manuscript behind me; whatever else I was destined to suffer, I would spare myself the sickness of heart and head which the very look of the discoloured and discolouring pages brought upon me.

Of my adventures in the States I will say nothing, save that they were, one and all, inspired by literary hopes. I am by nature phlegmatic in my person, and not very strong of constitution, but the gadfly of ambition gave me no rest. I had to pry into many nooks of earth and go among many companies of men and women (black and white), which inclination would have led me to avoid. I had also to face climates for which I was unsuited, and eat and drink strange compounds, which had a noxious effect upon me. As a result of all this, I fell ill of a fever, and for two grim months I lay tossing in bed, or crawled with diminishing strength up and down the sandy side-walks of the city in which I was prostrated. I suffered as I deserved to suffer. I had no one to console me. My landlord was a worthy fellow, but unsympathetic; and he amused me by telling me of the different Englishmen who had come South, and died in his house with symptoms precisely the same as my symptoms. My doctor was kind, but in my weakest moments he never forgot to make me search for my purse to pay him the two dollars he exacted as a visiting fee. My friends, when they wrote to me, rallied me about my illness, which they believed was a mere trifle, and they even doubted if I were really ill. Meanwhile, I grew weaker and weaker, and in my very low fits, when I could neither read nor sleep, I would think of the sandy cemetery outside the city, where the pines and magnolias towered high over the graves of many a forlorn stranger like myself, and whence during the wakeful hours of the night I could hear the booming hoot of the white-faced Southern owl; and it then seemed to me that my doom was settled, and that nothing remained for me to do but to die like a Briton. I remember in particular dragging myself to the wooden church of the city one Sunday night. The distance was about a quarter of a mile, and, by resting

against the big trunks of the evergreen oaks which lined the roads, I was able to get to the building in twenty minutes. I was late, but I obtained a seat, and, gasping for breath, and trembling from head to foot, I tried to follow the service. Once I stood up, it was at the Creed; but it was too much, and, all but in a faint, I sat down again, and kept a sitting position to the end. When the service was over, and the congregation were flocking out, weak though I was, it amused me and pricked the literary life that still throbbed within me, to see the fashions of the American dames, and the expressions of the faces of their bronzed, self-important husbands. I also rose and tottered into the aisle; but I could not go on. I had to stumble back to a seat, and had it not been for the good offices of a stranger—a doctor from Boston—who, from the pew behind me, had, he confessed, watched me with deep professional interest for the previous hour, I should have been forced to return to my sad lodgings on my hands and knees. This worthy doctor believed that I was almost at death's door—I was told as much by a disinterested acquaintance—and the advice of my own medical man, when next I saw him, seemed to confirm this belief. "Get home as fast as you can," he said. "The sea voyage might help you. You must not stay here any longer." I would have gone into the local hospital if I had been able, but it was full. For ten dollars a week they would give me a room, with board and medical attendance, as soon as possible, but they could not say when it would be possible.

I do not like to dwell upon this part of my life, though I avow that it was very improving in some respects. With the help of cordials, I returned to England, and fought out my illness victoriously, though physically it has proved to be a dearly bought victory. It was supposed that I could not make the journey by myself, and a young American lady came to my sick room one day and offered her services. For two dollars a day and all her expenses she would nurse me as if I were her brother, she said. I doubt whether sisters are better nurses than other people. But I remember laughing until I coughed with exhaustion, when the young woman made me this proposition. She was a pretty creature, and her curt American manner of speaking was very piquant; but I felt positive that she would make me marry her (bad bargain though she might have got

thereby), if she took charge of me in my weak condition. I thanked her and declined. With the meanness that does sometimes possess a lusty young woman, or even a woman not young, in the presence of an older or helpless person, she persisted, and bullied me cruelly. But eventually I got to Savannah, New York, and Liverpool, alone and unaided. Such was the outcome of the scheme of travel from which I had hoped so much!

Three years had elapsed. I was now worse than poor: I was in debt. Throughout the fourth year of my apprenticeship, I languished in ill-health, due to my American vicissitudes. From time to time, I sent my novel to a publisher. It was not accepted until three years after it was written, and until it had been cut and polished so that it was very dissimilar to its original. In all, it passed through the hands of nineteen different publishing houses. Two or three gave me criticisms upon it: and it was the germ of approval in these various notes that led me to spend my hours of convalescence in doing what I could to improve the work.

I was not idle during this year of sorrow; far otherwise. My conscience took every reasonable advantage of my powerlessness to preach to me: it gave me no peace. And it was after enduring a very bad quarter of an hour from this formidable, though intangible, part of my being, that, for the first time in my literary life, I took up the pen to some little profit. In two days I had written a brief record of one of my American experiences, and posted it to a high-class magazine. My illness had taught me the art of thinking; and "Cobbett's Grammar," which a friend had sent me for the beguilement of my lonely hours, had impressed upon me the importance of thinking before writing. The paper was accepted by the magazine, a proof of it came to me, and after the proof, a cheque for ten pounds. I assure you the cheque did me more good than all the pills and medicine I had been taking for the past six months.

Not long after this piece of luck, which was of course less estimable in itself than as a promise of good things to come, I was heartened in another way. The publishers of my first book sent me a statement of accounts, from which it appeared that there was at length a balance on the right side. The sum of seven shillings and sevenpence stood to our credit, divisible between the publisher and myself. Now I had grown

by this time into a state of contempt for the book which, with such mad haste, I had given to the public. I saw faults in every page of it. I could not open it without discovering a new fault. And yet the world had received the book so well, that, four years after its appearance, I was entitled to three shillings and tenpence as my share of the profit upon it! I was confirmed in my opinion that "the world" is much less wise than it is generally believed to be.

With the fifth year of my literary life, I began to work in earnest, under guidance of my past unsuccess, my reverses, and a kindly spirit of judicious industry which seemed to have taken up temporary lodgment in my mind, in order to set me upon the track of a happy prosperity, at once and for all. I found that I had lost none of my old imaginative power, and that I had, during the latest year of my life, gained amazingly in discretion. My fancies were no longer allowed to run rampant at their own sweet will, when I took pen in hand. They were under the curb; and nevertheless they were none the worse for thus being controlled by what I might now venture to call the "reason" that was in me. Instead of having my manuscripts returned by the different Editors in the course of a post or two, I waited weeks and months, and so had the luxury of surfeiting myself on hope very much prolonged. Now and again, moreover, a manuscript was briskly accepted. "I shall be happy to use the paper you have been good enough to send me:" or, "I like your article on 'Siberian Crabs,' and will use it for the magazine, if you will cut it down two-thirds." These are samples of the letters I now got from Editors. It was the same with my bulkier writings. I gave myself little or no rest. As soon as one paper was done with, I folded my arms and meditated, or thoughtfully turned the pages of my numerous note-books until an idea worth hatching (if I may say) rested with me: and then I hatched it.

Occasionally, however, my sparrow became a turkey, or even an ostrich. In other words, a story which I had proposed to bring within the compass of twenty pages, swelled until I could not bring it harmoniously to an end in fewer than five hundred pages. Thus my earlier novels saw the light: and they too were despatched to famous houses without a moment's delay, and kept for consideration during what I could not but think a long time.

Formerly, I had been wont to rush at a publisher's letter, when I saw it on my table, as a whitethroat pounces upon a summer fly. But now I let nothing disturb or worry me. For the discipline's sake, I would even eat my breakfast with the seal or the envelope of some influential publishing firm unbroken by my plate. They had had a romance of mine, on which I had built high hopes, for eight or nine months, maybe, and this was doubtless the verdict. From time to time, in reply to my polite note reminding them that I was still held in suspense, they had perchance given me no less polite assurances that the novel was still under consideration: they felt a difficulty in coming to a decisive opinion about the work! And yet I was able to extend my torture voluntarily, and for the mere form's sake. I aver that this was a triumph over the unruly wills and affections that does credit to the literary profession.

Another valuable lesson I learned about this time was the fatality of desultoriness in work. One may be desultory over one's dinner to some good purpose, or even in the enjoyment of a holiday: but in writing for one's daily bread, never. In the infantine stage of my apprenticeship, I would never move towards the ink-pot unless I were impelled by a very vigorous inspiration, such as resulted in my tragedy or my first novel; and I would then write on and on with incredible disregard for the clock. As a natural consequence of this sacrifice of the body's well-being, my work had been uneven: the spark of genius was smothered in smoke. But now (and, I confess, not without a sigh) I gave up all pretension to the claim of genius. I cuffed and coerced the hapless ambition within me until it did not dare even assume a phantasmal importance in my dreams. When I had my work before me, I watched my mind's movements as suspiciously as a weak father watches the development of a strong and disobedient son. When my spirits capered, I let them caper: but I did not work until they had done capering. By these ruthless Napoleonic measures of self-suppression, I fitted myself for a successful pursuit of literature. Literature may well be feminine: she leads her votaries a pretty dance; and, once having caught her, there is no getting free from her.

I do not feel called upon to say much about the subsequent course of my literary life. The worst was over by this time. When I look back upon the past, and con-

trast it with the present; or, when I contrast my actual present with the present that might have been mine; I do not know that I can say, like Macanlay: "If I had to choose a lot from all that there are in human life, I am not sure that I should prefer any to that which has fallen on me. I am sincerely and thoroughly contented." I smile as I write these words; for, let my better nature say what it will, I am not "sincerely and thoroughly contented" at all times. But at any rate I do not "peak and pine." I could not afford to do this, for it would be a drain on my capabilities. I think, however, there is much of good to say for a profession, that keeps a man from the many odious temptations of ill-doing which assail the majority of men in other of the walks of life. Not that the man of letters moves in a charmed circle. Oh, dear me, no! But methinks it is some gain to be able to affirm that his battles are mostly with himself, and that it therefore rests with himself to get the forgiveness and encouragement after strife, which have so potent an effect upon the human energies. "To struggle is not to suffer. Heaven grants to few of us a life of untroubled prosperity, and grants it least of all to its favourites. . . . To be cloyed perpetually is a worse fate than sometimes to stand within the vestibule of starvation." So says De Quincey, discussing Oliver Goldsmith, and defending him from the fulsome pity which it was then the fashion to pour upon the author of the "Vicar of Wakefield." Pity Goldsmith because his life did not run on the primrose way, and because he died young! One might as well pity the swallow because the poor creature has no rest, and is forced to leave our little island ere the summer be well past. "Wife and children he had not. They it is, being a man's chief blessings, that create also for him the deadliest of his anxieties; that stuff his pillow with thorns; that surround his daily path with snares."

Aye, truly, there's the rub. And herein I confess is my chief grievance against my profession. I long ardently to marry a dear maid, to whom my heart is drawn by golden threads; but I dare not so much as by word, look, or deed signify that I have for her an affection stronger than that she excites in the heart of the rest of the world. I believe she admires me in a manner; I am an anomaly, and she would like to crack me to see if there be anything in me after all. If I were to offer her my poor, weather-beaten heart and my busy life, she

would crimson with pleasure, I feel sure : but, alas! the pleasure would be from conquest, not sympathy. She has all the virtues I ever hope to see combined in one woman ; she is fair ; and yet she is not for me, much as I love her. She must have a husband who can give her more of his life than a literary man such as I can afford to give her. She would soon be jealous, I fear, of my profession.

In conclusion (still for the profit of those for whom this brief paper was primarily written), I may confess that there hardly passes a day of my life on which I do not put to myself the question—whether the intense mental toil and concentration necessary for the continued successful pursuit of my profession may not be at length intolerable! And yet each successive day finds me at my table, pen in hand! I soothe my disturbed and rebellious fancy with the hope that as soon as the last vestiges of youth are gone, this “grind,” which is so opposed to Nature in the time of one’s buoyant and animal energies, will become a mere matter of routine, pleasant rather than unpleasant.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

ELGIN AND NAIRN.

It is strange that Moray, no longer known on land as a working territory, should still remain in evidence upon the sea. The Frith of Moray testifies to the former existence of this important county, which once had the rank of a separate principality, if not of an independent kingdom. It is true that the county of Elgin is sometimes called Moray ; but this forms only a small portion of ancient Moravia, which embraced the counties of Elgin and Nairn, part of Banff, and a solid portion of Inverness-shire. In a general way, the further north we get, the colder we expect to find the climate, the less generous the soil and its products ; but in coming to Moray, all this is reversed. The great plain is so happily placed and sheltered, that it enjoys a milder climate than the rest of Scotland. It used to be said that Moray had fifteen days more summer than its neighbours—even forty days more were claimed by enthusiastic Moray men. And, in contrast with the bareness and poverty of much of the surrounding country, the abundance of Moray was celebrated by the old chroniclers. There was

“great plentie of wheat, barlie, otes, and such like graine, besides nuts and apples, likewise all kinds of fish, especially salmon.” And a later writer speaks of the “delectable plain whose comely gardens, enriched with corn-plantings, pasturage, stately dwellings overfaced with a generous Octavian gentry, and topped with a noble Earl, its chief patron, may be called a second Lombardy.”

As a set-off against this happy condition was the drawback of liability to heavy floods. Its rivers, which are fed by hundreds of mountain burns that become roaring torrents after heavy rainfall, are given to swift and sudden risings. The floods of 1824 found a graphic chronicler in Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and, coming upon a time when periodic literature was taking its first start, these Moray floods became almost typical examples of such disasters. But, probably, there were bigger floods before those days, that nobody took the trouble to write about. There were famines, certainly, for the people of Moray depended chiefly on their grain, and when crops failed, there was nothing to fall back upon. Thus we read how, in 1743, called the dear year, the peasantry walked about the fields, half starving, and assuaged their cravings for food by chewing herbs and especially the wild sorrel ; and there was another year of famine in 1782, known as the “frosty har’st,” when the corn would not ripen, and the rigours of an Arctic winter came, all out of season, upon the land.

In earlier times Moray suffered terribly also from the Highlanders. For the men of Moray were a distinct, and, as the Gaelic tribes of the hills considered, an intrusive race. The tenacious memory of the Gael retained the fact that in the old times these fertile plains had been theirs, and in plundering Moray they felt that they were only getting back a little of their own. But we shall have to go a long way back to find Celtic Moray. The district stood invitingly open for settlers from foreign shores, and even in the days of the Roman Empire, if we may trust the shadowy indications of the geographers of the period, it was inhabited by the Vacomagi, a people distinct from the Caledonii, who dwelt to the westward. Then we come to the Picts, of whose seven provinces Moray, with Ross, formed an important unit. But then recent theories resolve the Picts altogether into mere Highlanders, and the Pictish kingdom into a confederation of Gaelic tribes, which for a time contested the encroachments of

Scot and Saxon. Anyhow, when we first get a glimmer of light on the condition of Moray, it is ruled by a Celtic chief, who bears the title of Marmor. This is in the latter part of the ninth century, when Sigurd, Earl of Orkney, attacked and mastered the north of Scotland, including Caithness, Ross, and Moray.

Sigurd had fought and killed the Marmor of Moray, and was riding home in triumph with the head of his enemy hanging to the saddle-bow, when a strange accident happened to him. Wild and fierce was the head of the slain warrior hanging by its shaggy red locks, and strong protruding teeth gave the face an aspect of ferocity that death could not quench. It was as if the hatred that the Gael bore to his conqueror were indeed unquenchable, for with the swaying of the horse, the naked thigh of the Sigurd was struck and scratched by a projecting fang of the dead. The scratch proved the Earl's death wound; the poison from the Marmor's tooth spread through all his frame, and so he died in agony. Then his conquests were lost or partly lost, for the swaying to and fro of victory or defeat went on for centuries—incessant fighting, burning, plundering, murders, massacres, all of which went to the making of Scotland; as if it were a brew of all the poisonous ingredients of the witches' cauldron to be boiled down into good wholesome porridge.

We shall come to the witches themselves forthwith, for this is their very country, of which Macbeth was indeed the Marmor. He may have been Thane of Glamis also, and cousin to the King of Scotland; but it was as a Celtic chieftain that he became a formidable claimant to the throne. In the tragedy of Macbeth, Shakespeare follows Hollinshed's chronicle pretty closely, and Hollinshed borrowed wholesale from the earlier Scottish chronicles. In these the weird sisters appear with due dignity, and local tradition confirms the story of the apparition. "The exact spot," writes Chambers, "where the event is asserted by the country people to have taken place, is marked by a small clump of trees about two hundred yards north of the post road between Forres and Nairn, near a toll-bar five miles from Forres," and nearly on the county border of Elgin and Nairn, in a still, wild region called the Hardmoor.

The reign of Macbeth seems to mark the temporary predominance of the Gael,

and his overthrow the victory of the Sassenach. But Moray remained unsubdued till the following century, when its last Marmor was overthrown and slain. Till then Scotland had not extended beyond the Spey and the mountain chain of Drumalban. The Celtic population, however, would not submit to a rule which reduced them to servitude. A great revolt followed, and when this was suppressed by the superior arms and discipline of the Southern knights, a general clearance of Moray was resolved upon. The Gaelic population was driven away to the hills, and their lands assigned to a less turbulent and more industrious race. Flemings and Lowlanders were settled upon the plains—a precarious and uneasy settlement, for the Highlanders gave them no rest from raid and foray, and the King with his power was often set at nought in more serious invasions. At last, however, by cruel and vigorous extirpation Moray was pacified, and Alexander the Second kept Yule at Elgin for the first time in full security A.D. 1231.

The subjection of Moray had been powerfully aided by the religious communities settled there by pious Scottish Kings. The Priory of Urquhart has disappeared without leaving a trace; but Kinloss, which boasted a mitred Abbot and dignified establishment, still shows a ruined fragment of wall or tower above the low coast-line, and the quiet, melancholy estuary of the Findhorn river.

An unwelcome guest at the Abbey of Kinloss was Edward the First of England, who advanced to Elgin in force and occupied the chief posts round about. But, except for that visit, Moray was not much concerned in the Bruce wars. Up to this time there had been no Earl of Moray; the district had been in the hands of the "custodes Moraviae," but Bruce appointed his faithful Thomas Randolph, Earl of the province, a title whose descent has known many vicissitudes. The Randolphs did not enjoy it long. Thomas's two sons both succeeded, and both were killed in battle without leaving descendants, and their sister, Black Agnes, famed for her defence of Dunbar, gave the titular dignity to her husband, Patrick Dunbar of that ilk, known as the Earl of Mar and Moray. The second son of this doughty pair had the good fortune to marry a daughter of King Robert the Second—King Blearie—and the Earldom of Moray was confirmed to him, but shorn of some

of its richest members in the districts of Badenoch, Lochaber, and Urquhart, which were taken to form a principality for a younger son of the King. This youth became unpleasantly famous as the Wolf of Badenoch—which is the south-east corner of Inverness-shire—and made himself especially obnoxious to the Bishop of Moray, whose Cathedral at Elgin he burnt about his ears.

The shrunken, but still valuable Earldom remained for two or three generations with the Dunbars, who then flickered out, and the Earldom was then granted to Archibald Douglas, who had married one of the Dunbars. The men of Moray had no affection for the Douglasses, and, in the wars that followed between Douglas and Stewart, they inclined to the side of the Crown. To punish them the Douglasses invited the Macdonalds to ravage the country, which they did with great good-will. Archibald Douglas was killed in a fight with the King's party, in Eskdale, on the western borders, the Earldom was estranged, and King James the Second came in person to pacify Moray. In the process he laid waste a great track of country to form a forest for his own hunting.

After a period of abeyance the Earldom of Moray was conferred on an illegitimate James Stewart, who died without progeny in 1544; and then, after a time, the Earl of Huntly possessed himself of the estates of the Earldom, while Queen Mary bestowed the title on her natural brother, James Stewart. Huntly was defeated and killed at Corrichie, as has already been told in the chronicles of the Gordons, in Aberdeenshire; and the new Earl became famous afterwards as the Regent Murray. The Regent, shot by Hamilton at Linlithgow, left two daughters, one of whom married James Stewart, of Doune, the Bonnie Earl of Moray of the ballad—

He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the glove;
And the bonnie Earl of Moray,
He was the Queen's luvie.

This was the Earl who was killed at Dumbriessell, or, according to modern spelling, Dumbriessle Castle, by the vengeful Gordons. The days of blood feuds, however, were passing away, and the Bonnie Earl's son was reconciled with the Gordons and married Lady Anne Gordon, from which alliance sprang the family that still hold the title of Earls of Moray.

Chief city of both Bishopric and Earl-

dom is Elgin, brightest and most charming of Scottish towns, lying pleasantly and securely on the right bank of the river Lossie. Old Elgin, indeed, has well-nigh disappeared, with its fine old houses—palaces, rather—of the local nobility, of a character unique and picturesque, with open piazzas leading to inner courts, and a play of light and shadow, but shadow chiefly, that might have delighted an artist's soul. But these old palaces, falling into the condition of alums, and being divided into miserable tenements, were, no doubt, uncomfortable and unhealthy, and it is useless to deplore their fate or to grumble at the brighter dwellings that have replaced them. The "muckle church of St. Giles," the oldest, and perhaps the most dilapidated, in the kingdom, has also been replaced by a commodious structure suitable for the simple offices of the Scottish Kirk. But the ruins of the Cathedral still remain, that proud citadel of the ancient faith, the ornament of the district, the glory of the kingdom, the admiration of foreigners.

It may be noted that, while the peasantry and farmers of Moray were attached to the Reformed Faith—more from political than religious leanings—yet nowhere was there a stronger attachment to the old faith and the old rites than among the gentry and upper classes of the district. And the once beautiful Cathedral of Elgin formed a central object for these affections and regrets. The lead might be torn from the roofs, and devoted to the sacrilegious cause—it was told with secret complaisance how the ship which carried the ill-omened burden sank with it in the deep sea, and was heard of no more—the choir might be ruined and bare, but still the sweet birds sang; the adherents of the old faith gathered around the broken shrine; mass was said; and echoes of the old worship hung about the ruined walls. Mass was said for the last time in the Cathedral A.D. 1594; but down to the reign of Queen Anne, at all events, the place was resorted to in secret by the Catholics of the neighbourhood with votive offerings; and who can say that, in the reign of Queen Victoria, the practice is not continued? The final ruin of the Cathedral was due rather to neglect than active malevolence. In 1711, on Easter Sunday, the central tower fell with a great crash—it is the ultimate fate of all such towers, the glory and weakness of the style—and in its fall it demolished

the nave and the greater part of the transepts. And there the ruins lay, a mere rubbish heap and quarry, for nearly a century, when an enthusiast took it in hand to clear the ruins, and was appointed curator of the site. A wall was built around the graveyard—full of monuments interesting and curious—and the whole is now protected and well cared for.

Everyone knows the saying, "Half done as Elgin was half burned," and this records the burning of the part of Elgin owned by the Douglasses, while the portion belonging to the Gordons, or their friends, was spared. This burning was done by Huntly, the conqueror of Earl Beattie, in the Douglas wars. The Douglasses retaliated, and attacked Huntly in his quarters, driving him out of the town, and killing many of the Gordons in the bog of Dunkinty, which lies close at hand to the north-west of the Cathedral. Hence the mocking distich,

What's come o' thy men, thou Gordon so gay?
They're i' the bogs o' Dunkintie, mowing the hay!

At an earlier period the Wolf of Badenoch laid waste the town and fired the Cathedral. Indeed, the position of the Bishop of Moray, surrounded by fierce intractable neighbours, was not a bed of roses. His spiritual weapons were not always effectual. Huntly, excommunicated, braved the terrors of his position, and threatened, if the interdict were not removed, to come and drag the Bishop out of his pigeon-holes. In reply to this threat the Bishop replied rather in the spirit of a Scot than a Churchman, that he would presently build a house that all the Gordons should not pull him out of. And thus was built David's Tower, called after its builder, David Stewart, the then Bishop—still a fine ruin upon the margin of the once famous Loch of Spynie, now drained and nearly all dry land.

In all these disturbances the once strong castle on Lady Hill took no part, for it had not been occupied since the days of Bruce's wars. The foundations of the castle still remain, and the curious shape of the Castle Hill, an artificial mound having apparently been raised on the summit of the natural hill, has given rise to a curious legend.

The castle, it seems was, in the misty "once upon a time," inhabited by a numerous garrison. The plague was abroad, and settled upon the castle, over which it could be seen to hover in the form of a cloud, light, but of a deep blue colour. The

inhabitants of the town, which had been hitherto free from the plague, consulted together and took the bold resolution of stamping, or rather smothering it out. They assembled with spades and picks, and covered the whole place deep in mould with all its inmates. But life still goes on in the enchanted castle, and faint sounds from the underground world may be heard by those who listen with faithful ears. Cocks crow in the morn; dogs bark and children cry; you may hear the mother crooning over her babe; horses neigh, and rattle their halter-chains; and the warder still tramps on the deeply-buried battlements. It is nothing to the purpose that recent excavations on Mary Hill have not led to the discovery of the subterranean community; for Elf-land is not to be reached by such common-place methods.

The long main street of Elgin, stretching a mile from east to west, may be followed in the latter direction to Forres, with glimpses on the way of the mouth of the Findhorn river and the ruins of Kinloss Abbey.

"How far is't called to Forres?" asks Banquo, just before he sees the weird sisters; and travellers may still look out for the witches' stone, which lies at the east end of the town, one of three that once commemorated the fate of the three witches who were burnt to death on Drumduan Hill. Close by is another curious sculptured stone, that bears the name of Sueno's Stone, and is said to record a victory over Sweyn, the brother of King Canute, and his Norwegians. But the aspect of the town is altogether modern and cheerful, as it lies on its terraced ridge surrounded by a rich and highly cultivated country, with hedges and plantations that give the place quite an English aspect. The Castle Hill, once occupied by Edward's soldiers, now shows the ruins of an eighteenth-century house, built, without counting the cost, by some over-ambitious laird. A most ancient burgh is Forres, with extensive corporate estates, among which is Clunyhill, a public resort laid out prettily in walks and plantations, with a glorious view from the summit of all the country round.

Beyond, still to the westward on the same line, lies Nairn, a bright, pleasant watering-place, wholesome and dry, with a fishing village attached, once divided almost equally between Gael and Sassenach. One of King James's pawkie stories, with which he mystified his English courtiers,

was about Nairn. "A place in my dominions sae long that the inhabitants of one end did not understand the language spoken at the other;" for the north-east part of the village was then occupied by English-speaking fishermen, while the south-west belonged to the Highlanders, who understood only Gaelic. Dr. Johnson, touring towards the Hebrides, visited Nairn, and fixed there the verge of the Highlands, for there he first saw peat fires and heard the Erse language.

Nairn was originally Inver-nearn, and the river Nairn was *Uisge Nearn*, or the Water of Alders, from the trees which shade its banks. Following the course of the river, we come to the famous Castle of Cawdor, the ancient seat of the Thane of that ilk. The title of Thane is of course *Sassenach*, and it is likely that Macbeth would have been hailed by the witches, who probably spoke Gaelic, as *Toisach* of Cawdor, that being the Celtic title which Saxon tongues translated into Thane. But anyhow, the Thane, or *Toisach*, of Cawdor was the great potentate in those parts, and his possessions, stretching into the neighbouring counties (if we may thus speak of them, like General Wade's roads, "before they were made"), led to the patchy condition of Nairn as a shire, with three detached fragments in Elgin, and a piece in Inverness, as well as another in Ross.

A Campbell, offshoot from the great Ducal house of Argyle, is now Thane of Cawdor, and, how the Thanedom originally came into the far-stretching hands of that powerful clan is told in a pleasant legend, which contains, no doubt, a considerable seasoning of veritable history.

In 1498, the last of the ancient line of Thanes of Cawdor died, and left an infant heiress, Muriel Calder, on whose frail life depended the succession to the broad estates of the house. The old tower of Cawdor was strong and high, and half-a-dozen stout uncles—her mother's brothers, no doubt—kept jealous guard over the precious life of the babe, whose fluffy locks already, in their glowing hue, betrayed her Gaelic ancestry. In these days, to win an heiress, one must wait till she is of marriageable age; and then it is an affair of ball-rooms and garden parties, pleasant meetings at country houses, and the like, combined with judicious family negotiations. But our forbears had rougher and readier methods. The Campbells had their eyes upon the fair lands of Cawdor, so convenient to extend their grip upon the

Highlands. And thus, in the year after her father's death, when the little maid could just run alone, sixty grim Campbells lay in ambush about the tower, and, discovering little Muriel walking abroad with her nurse, pounced upon them and carried off the child.

The alarm was given; the bold uncles rode off in hot pursuit; they overtook the Campbells before the fleet-footed Highlanders could reach the shelter of the hills. They would have rescued their little ward but for the presence of mind of Campbell of Innerliver. Among the impediments of the raiders was, it seems, a huge camp-kettle, big enough to boil the porridge of the whole party. This was overturned upon the grass, and Campbell, posting his seven sons about it, bade them defend it with their lives. The seven youths stood boldly to their post, and the pursuers, judging that they were defending the precious spoil they had carried off, attacked these first. The seven sons of Innerliver were slain, the kettle was carefully turned over, but there was no babe beneath it; and, by that time, the rest of the Campbells were safe among the hills with their prize.

It is said that Muriel's nurse, retaining her presence of mind in the first alarm, had bitten off a joint of Muriel's little finger, so that there might be no chance of a supposititious heiress being foisted upon the house of Cawdor. The precaution was not superfluous, for when it was suggested to a chief of the Campbells how awkward it would be after all this trouble if the child should die—"She can never die," was the reply, "as long as a red-haired lassie can be found along Lochawe." Nor would it have been difficult, perhaps, to have found a clansman of powerful jaw who would have made little difficulty in giving the proper tooth-mark.

The little lady of Cawdor House did not die, and at twelve years old she was married to Sir John Campbell, third son of the second Earl of Argyle; and that was how the Campbells came to be Thanes of Cawdor.

The castle itself is a fine specimen of the ancient barons' hold, built on a commanding brow, with a fine old square tower flanked by pepper-box turrets, and beneath, a long, grim-looking range of buildings with windows high in the massive walls. Tradition, too, has been busy about the building of Cawdor Castle. An ass, laden with gold, was driven forth to choose a

sire for the new stronghold, and halted obstinately under a spreading hawthorn tree. About the hawthorn tree the castle was built, and there stands the tree to this day in the very basement of the castle, its strong arms thrust into the masonry in a way that shows that on this head at least the popular story was well founded. At Cawdor, as at Glamis, there is a hidden chamber, the existence of which should only be known to a faithful few. In this room Lord Lovat was concealed, it is said, in 1746, but grew tired of his captivity, and preferred to face his doom on Tower Hill.

The muniment room of Cawdor possesses a goodly collection of archives, a selection from which was published in 1859 by the Spalding Club, of Edinburgh, under the title of the "Book of Cawdor," of great value to the painstaking student of the manners and customs of the Scots of the last few centuries.

A pleasant book, too, is Lachlan Shaw's "History of Moray," the original quarto edition of which, published in 1775, is somewhat scarce. The Rev. Lachlan Shaw was a minister of the Scotch Church, and a scion of the Shaws of Rothiemurchus, the last a name that suggests at once the Highland piper and the celebrated Rant; and, with such connections, it is no wonder that the good minister is skilled in Highland genealogy, and behind the scenes in the quarrels and punctilios of the Highland clans. One of his stories of a Highland feud is too characteristic to be passed over, although it only indirectly concerns Moray.

John Munroe, tutor of Fowles, on his return from Edinburgh, where he had been on some legal business connected with his trust—for the tutor in Scotch law is simply the legal guardian of an estate—passed through Moray, and, tired with his journey, saw a pleasant meadow lying by the wayside with soft turf and quiet shade, inviting repose. Here he dismounted with his one faithful henchman and attendant, and, stretching himself out on the grassy bank, presently fell asleep. It might have been the duty of a faithful henchman to have watched while his chieftain slept; but they were in a friendly country, the way had been long, the day was hot, and the servant was soon asleep by his master's side, while their horses browsed quietly beside them. Presently the owner of the field came along, evidently a man who had no notion of generosity or hospitality, and finding two

rough-looking Highland chieftains—who might be drovers or horse dealers—trespassing upon his meadow, he determined to give them a lesson, and cruelly enough cropped their horses' tails to the stump. When Munroe awoke and saw what had been done, the indignity, even more than the injury he had suffered, sank deeply into his soul. Away he rode homewards, and speedily raised his clan, and presently three hundred Munroes, burning to avenge the insult done to their chief, poured into the vale of the pleasant meadow.

The dalesmen saved themselves, no doubt, for we do not read of any slaughter being done, but they lost their cattle, which were seized and driven off by the Highlanders. Thus far all was straightforward enough: the Lowlanders had enjoyed their joke, no doubt; the Highlanders had their spoil; and the affair was complete. But in returning to their own strath with their cattle, they passed along the country of the Macintoshes, the chief of which clan espied them as they crossed the hills. Now, according to Highland etiquette, when one gentleman drove his spoil across the lands of another, a certain compliment was due—a "Stike Crieach, or Road Collup," as Shaw expresses it; in other words, a certain portion of the booty. The Macintosh was naturally a little indignant that his friends should try to steal past without paying him the accustomed civility; hence, perhaps, the message he sent in demanding his right was more peremptory than courteous. The Munroes acknowledged that something was due, but considered his demand extortionate, and returned a message of an insulting nature. Macintosh full of anger, raised his clan, pursued the Munroes and overtook them at Clachnahurie, near Inverness. The ground was covered with rocks and boulders; the Munroes were skilful bowmen, and concealed behind the rocks they made great slaughter among their pursuers, and eventually secured their retreat with all their spoil. In this skirmish Macintosh was killed, and John Munroe was hurt, so that he went lame all the rest of his life.

Our friend Lachlan also lets us into the secret of how battles were lost and won on the skirts of the Highlands. That battle of Glenlivet for instance, when the Campbells went down before the Gordons: there Lord Huntly had field pieces, and many of the other army had never seen artillery, —and then "Lochinell (whose brother

Argyle had put to death for murdering Campbell of Calder, anno 1592, who was Argyle's nearest heir) had wrote to Huntly to point his artillery against the yellow standard." Why, it is hard to see, for Lochinell was himself slain by the standard, while Argyle escaped—but such intricacies can only be understood by Highlanders.

Then there was the battle of Aldern, between Montrose and the Covenanters in 1645. There "Major Drummond, called The Crowner, wheeling about unskilfully, broke the footmen of his own side." He was tried at Inverness, and was shot for this ill conduct, which had cost the lives of eight hundred Covenanters, and given Moray over to the spoiler.

OUR AVIARY.

It was not a very expensive matter to set it going. We saw a Crystal Palace cage advertised in "Exchange and Mart," price twenty-three shillings, sent a post-office order for the amount to the address given, and in due time our birds' home arrived in safety. This was one point gained. We then ordered the carpenter to make a plain deal stand, so that the cage could be raised to the level of the window-ledge; purchased canary, rape, millet, and hemp seed; filled the drawers; bought and supplied with water an elegant bird-fountain, and our aviary was complete—with the exception of some feathered things to live in it.

These soon grew into a delightful collection—beginning with small things—like a snowball, and gradually attaining size and proportion.

First of all came a kind friend's gift—two slender, saffron-coloured canaries, as full of impudence and curiosity as it was possible for birds to be. Into every nook and cranny of the cage, that must have seemed like a veritable Crystal Palace to them, did they peep and pry. They even pecked at the fastenings of the doors, as though they had a mind to try further wanderings. These worthies were duly christened Bertie and Day, and became, as it were, the "oldest inhabitants" of the aviary.

The next I got was a remarkably fine cock bullfinch, whom we named Sam. At first he sulked terribly, huddled himself up like a bundle of feathers in one corner of the cage, and half the time kept his head under his wing. Then was seen in its perfection the curiosity that

possesses the soul of every canary. The two yellow slender things went gently up to him on either side, pecked at him in a tentative manner, and looked at him with their heads on one side, as who should say, "Is this bird only a stuffed specimen from which no manners can be expected, or is this demeanour an intentional insult?" The bullfinch, evidently aware that the impertinent creatures were trying to see what he was made of, suddenly lifted his head, opened an immense black mouth at them (which sight sent them flying); roused himself to energy; bathed; partook of a hearty supper of hemp seed; and took his place upon one of the perches, swelling out his salmon-coloured breast to abnormal dimensions, as much as to say, "what do you think of that for a waistcoat?"

A hen bullfinch—Eliza by name—was now added to our collection, and of her I have a strange and most mysterious tale to tell. From some cause, or causes, unknown, Eliza lost her elegant smoke-coloured tint, and became, absolutely and literally, "as black as the pot." Her fame went abroad, and bird fanciers and others came to look at the "black bullfinch." If Eliza had been trying to pass herself off as a crow she could not have been blacker—wings, breast and all—and I should be very glad if any readers of this magazine can suggest a reason for such an extraordinary metamorphosis, or tell me of any similar case. One hears of the pride with which people become the possessors of a white elephant, and surely I may be permitted to confess to a feeling of gratified vanity in the possession of a black bullfinch.

Our next acquisition was a pair of weaver birds, yclept "Mr. and Mrs. Chow-Chow," from a habit the cock-bird had of favouring us with that imbecile ejaculation every few moments or so. For a long time Mr. Chow-Chow was what might be called "cock of the walk." Where the other birds fought and pecked one another to get possession of any dainty morsel, Chow-Chow only came, and at sight of his rose-red bill and sharp, black eyes, away the others fled. We provided Chow-Chow with plenty of garden-matting torn up into fine strips, and he forthwith set to work and built himself houses and barns, using the wire sides of the cage for the foundations of these airy dwellings, which were most deftly and ingeniously woven together, and had a very pretty appearance, seen from outside. However, having constructed them, Chow-Chow took no more

head of them, and they were left for the other birds to fight for as roosting places—a proceeding they never failed to carry out every night.

Three little redpoles came next to take up their abode in the aviary, and soon became a source of never-ending amusement to us. They went by the name of "the three Miss Smiths," and were all so much alike we could not tell the one from the other. They had strong gymnastic tendencies, and one had a trick of flinging herself head over heels off the highest perch, and coming up right end uppermost after the plunge, that any acrobat might have envied. Another would dance upon the perch like a Taglioni, springing into the air, and pirouetting in marvellous fashion.

We then bought a pair of Java sparrows from a travelling bird-catcher, and added them to the crew. A tragedy followed. Nebuchadnezzar (so-called from his passion for green stuff) did not, evidently from the first, appreciate his wife. She was a mangy, unhealthy-looking bird with a paucity of feathers; indeed, we began to fear that the peripatetic bird merchant was a man by no means actuated by the highest principles. One morning the lady was found lying dead upon the cage-floor, while her heartless lord was joyously spluttering in the bath. From that day to this, Nebbie (we called him Nebbie for short) has laboured under suspicion of wife-murder. Be this as it might, he bore his remorse, if any, in a jaunty manner, and took cheerily to the life of a gay old bachelor, with decidedly greedy tendencies. The whole aim of Nebbie's life is to get as much as he can for himself, and keep as much as possible away from anybody else. He is a tall, lanky bird, and may be seen straddling across the small glass dish that holds the hemp-seed, so as to keep it all to himself and prevent the others getting at it while he gorges.

The end of the reign of King Chow-Chow came on this wise.

We bought a pair of Australian love-birds. They were like Cæsar. They came, they saw, they conquered. Their hooked beaks, and long green tails were too much for everybody. Whatever they wanted, they took, and their companions fled while they consumed it.

It must make life a very easy thing, one would think, this continuous and effortless victory over one's fellows, but perhaps it is hardly wholesome, for our green paro-

quets have got into a dreadful habit of preaching, and earned for themselves the dual sobriquet of "Moody and Sankey." This preaching on their part—carried on with vast gesticulation and wonderful flutterings—seems to have a solemnising effect upon the rest, as though the long-tailed speakers opened each discourse by asserting themselves in the familiar fashion, "and when we speak, let no dog bark." These potentates in green and gold have a delightful way of enforcing discipline, which appears to be thoroughly effectual. When a bird is contumacious or quarrelsome, they take him gently but firmly by the wing and swing him to and fro in mid air. When let go, he seems to be at once a sadder and a wiser bird.

Nor is this their only accomplishment, nor yet by any means the most awe-inspiring. These curious birds sing with their heads beneath their wings! Can it be wondered at, that the sight of a headless bird singing his best, singing into himself as it were, should strike terror into yellow, speckled, or salmon-coloured breasts? Even upon myself the effect was, at first, rather unpleasant. I looked and looked again. Could I believe my eyes? Was that headless green body producing that ceaseless, twittering song? Yes: for I saw the long slender tail vibrate to each trilling cadence; I saw the whole bundle of feathers jerk and tremble as the song grew louder and louder. Apparently the bird was asleep—singing in his dreams—and, at last, woke himself with his own song. Meanwhile, the canaries were greatly agitated: hopping now on this side of the songster, now on that: stretching out their yellow necks, uttering long sweet notes of wonder, and even pecking him gently. They have grown more used to his habits and customs now, which is a good thing, since one or other of the paroquets is generally singing and dreaming in this curious manner, as evening comes on.

Our next additions were a pair of green linnets, rather sleepy, peaceable birds, who sing in a soft, subdued kind of way, and devote much of their time and attention to the seed-boxes.

I see I have omitted to mention one very reprehensible habit on the part of "Nebbie." So greedy is he of green food, that he stands upon as much of it as he can drag down, while he gobbles at the rest, always reminding me of certain old retired Generals and Colonels at the military clubs, who are said to sit upon two

or three newspapers while they read another, and thereby aggravate their compeers to an almost unbearable extent. Nebbie aggravates his compeers. Indeed, he is—I own it with a sigh—full of faults to a distressing degree. He has murdered his mangy old wife—he is greedy, avaricious, unamiable; he gets bodily into the bath, which is only just big enough to hold his clumsy body, and pecks at the others over the edge; he has no redeeming qualities—and yet—

Nebbie! with all thy faults,
I love thee still!

It must be that in his consummate impudence lies a charm.

Speaking of impudence reminds me to chronicle the fact that, when the hen-canary was sitting, she used to stoop down from her nest high in the corner of the cage, and pick out a feather from some comrade perched beneath, calmly appropriating it to assist in lining her soft, warm bed. On one occasion she dared to steal a lovely green feather from one of the paroquets; but she almost dropped it at the screech he gave; not quite though, for I saw it myself carefully laid at the bottom of the nest.

Spending much of my time as I do sitting well within view of the aviary, many interesting lights and shades of bird life and bird character have become known to me.

I have recognised the fact that birds differ from one another in character, just as human beings do; that each bird has its own little ways, its own little fads and fancies, just as you and I have; and that similarity of faces by no means necessitates uniformity of characteristics. I have a bullfinch that is genial and urbane, that I am quite sure would not hurt a fly; and one that is jealous of every creature that is not himself, and who, just like jealous people amongst ourselves, makes misery and wretchedness for others as well as for himself. At times he becomes so unbearable, that the others fall upon him to his sad undoing, and, limp and draggled, he has to be taken out of the big cage and put into a little one until his temper is cured by solitary confinement, and his wounds healed by time.

There are times of rest, and times of activity, in the bird-life of each day. The morning is all twitter and flurry and hurry; the seed is eaten; the groundsel or chickweed, or cut apple, taken greedily. Then comes the bath; such a spluttering and fluttering; such pushing one

another aside; such jostling and chattering! Water-spray flies about everywhere; some throw it higher than others; some are lazy, and take their stand where they are sprinkled only by the exertions of others. Timid birds, afraid of the depth of water of the pink-glass lake in the centre of the cage, will constantly do this, deliberately stationing themselves where the spray falls thickest. After the general bath comes the general drying; a most delicious rustling and ruffling of feathers; and this is followed by delicate and fastidious attention to details of the toilette, each smallest feather having to be manipulated by the cunning little beak that knows so well how to be brush and comb in one.

Towards the hour that is in summer the hottest—i.e., about four of the afternoon—a strange quiet settles down upon my bird-world. Sometimes they are so absolutely still, each bird sitting squatted on the perches, with puffed-out breast-feathers, that the aviary might almost be taken for a case of stuffed birds. The bullfinch will make an ugly mouth at you if you disturb him in this siesta of his, but he will hardly budge unless you push him; the canaries have their heads under their wings, and look like a couple of fresh-made cowalip balls, balanced on the bar; it is the hour of lassitude and rest—the hour that corresponds to the “noontide sleep” of the Oriental.

It passes, and the little feathered denizens of the wire-bound world wake up, eat and drink, flutter and fly; and then a “service of song” sets in, a sweet good-night, harmonised for many voices, in which, though each sings a different note and time, is no discordance.

Bed-time, which follows upon this, is a period of some trouble. There is delay in “settling down,” since everyone wants to sleep in the airy structure woven by “Mr. Chow-Chow’s” busy beak, and the said structure will only hold one. As a rule, each bird in the aviary sets himself up on high there in turn; and is in turn thrown down by another bird. In a contest like this weight tells, and Nebbie generally remains in the end in peaceful possession of the coveted shelter.

One fact about birds is most strongly impressed upon my mind as a consequence of my long study of “Our Aviary,” and that is, what thirsty little souls they are. Just keep the water-dish out of the cage for a bit, and then you will see. They almost touch the hand that replaces it in their

haste to reach the haven of their desires ; they shove and push, and even trample upon one another to get near it. With what ecstasy the little beaks are dipped in for the cooling draught, and the pretty heads lifted to swallow, as if returning thanks to Heaven for one of its best gifts !

The sight makes one think of some still, clear pool, hidden in the soft, green recesses of a wood, and of what a fair sight it must be to see God's creatures, great and small, come down to drink from its bosom, where the tree shadows show so beautiful, and the wild flowers on its brink find a mirror.

What a fount of joy, what a well-spring of delight must that hidden pool be to the birds of Heaven in the early morning, when the dawn first touches its surface into brightness ; when the noonday sun turns it into gold ; and when the shadows of eventide make it deep and dark with the shadows of the clouds that float above it !

Dwelling upon these beautiful "aspects of nature" with our mind's eye, the words of the "Sweet Singer of Israel" come home to us, ringing out clear and true across the vista of the centuries that are past—giving us that most perfect portrayal of peace and rest and uttermost content—"He shall lead me beside the still waters."

THE SHEPHERD OF THE SALT LAKE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMER waned, and the autumn came with a breath of freshness and a sobering touch, that lent a fuller charm to the mulga ridges, and chastened the sun's heat with gentle breezes. Its first month brought no new experience to the two lonely dwellers by the Salt Lake, further than that testified by the change in their surroundings. They lived their solitary life—undisturbed, except by the rare visits of the sheep overseer from the head station—pursuing a daily routine that seldom altered. The old shepherd fulfilled his trust to the uttermost letter. He scarcely ever allowed the child out of his sight. He made her a bunk in his hut, and every night undressed her, and remained by her till she had fallen asleep. He looked after her with a tenderness her own mother could not have surpassed. His quiet flock required little care, of their own accord they would come

and go to the yards at the accustomed time ; and so he was able to devote himself almost entirely to his little charge. No act of his that could give her pleasure was too much trouble for him. He lived in the child. Her slightest wish was law. Almost the whole day was spent in trying to amuse her.

At first little Lizzie enjoyed to the utmost the liberty and independence of her new life. She had no lessons to do now—no reading or spelling. And Scotty cooked her nice things. She could have as much "brownie" as she wanted. It was very nice to have so much cake ; and sometimes he made her "lolly" from the brown ration sugar. Then he got her luscious currajong roots—bush cocoanut, as he called it—and wild fruits and berries, and nice sour binil grass. It was all very pleasant at first, and Lizzie felt herself a veritable queen. Scotty would do anything she asked him—make her toys, and tell her stories, and carry her pick-a-back when she was tired, and catch a sheep for her to play with, and hold her hand at night till she fell asleep. But soon the solitude began to weigh upon the child's spirits. She longed for her father and mother again, even for the sound of the hammering and the ring of the axe-strokes, that used to make her head ache so. The bush was so silent now, that sometimes it frightened her, and even the battering of the mawl on the iron wedges would have been a welcome change. As the days dragged on their weary length, this feeling became stronger and stronger. The child began to pine for other companionship than that of the half-witted old man ; the very intensity of his affection became irksome to her.

And so the first month of autumn passed, and then a sudden change came to the mulga ridges and the silent Salt Lake. The wet season was unusually late that year, but when at last the rain did set in, it fell in unusual quantities. For two days it came down in an almost continuous down-pour, and then cleared off, only to recommence in lighter showers. During that time little Lizzie was confined to the hut ; and a weary, weary time she found it. The old shepherd would take advantage of any temporary break in the weather to let his flock out, in order that the sheep might pick up a mouthful ; but he would not allow Lizzie to accompany him, fearful of her getting wet.

The rain came down. and the patient

sheep stood nearly all day long with hanging heads under lee of the brush yards; the mulga ridges and the Salt Lake were blotted out; the air was heavy and moist; and the hut was so dreary that poor Lizzie, used to being out in the fresh air all day long, hardly knew what to do with herself. All Scotty's efforts failed to amuse her any longer. She longed for some change in her dull life; she sighed for the return of the sunshine, for her father and mother to come back again.

It was better when the rain cleared off, and the warm sun came out again, and made everything bright and pleasant. As though by magic the mulga ridges, with the stony hollows between, assumed a new appearance. Two days of bright weather were sufficient to bring the sweet-smelling herbage out, and to cause the grasses to put forth their tender green shoots. Pools glistened in the hollows; the red loam—before so parched—was moist and soft, and exhaled a fresh earthy smell that mingled with the more delicate perfume of the young herbage. The mulga trees assumed a fresher green; the drooping fronds of the tall peppermint trees dripped a resinous thanksgiving for the fresh nutriment their spreading roots sucked up; even in the patches of scrub the rain seemed to have washed off some of the dinginess. All was bright and fresh, and Lizzie, freed from her imprisonment, forgot, for the time, her weary longing and impatience.

The two were seated, one day, near the gibbera hole, now overflowing and filling the narrow gully. The sheep were scattered along the edge of the Salt Lake, nibbling greedily at the tender young herbage that had sprung up, as it were, almost by magic.

Old Scotty was gazing out at the desolate waste of the Salt Lake.

"Why are you looking like that?" asked Lizzie curiously, laying her hand on the old man's knee.

"I'm thinking what a terrible place it is," he answered mechanically. "Look at it. It's nothing but a steaming bog. And see, it's trembling and shaking like a hungry thing. It's hidyus."

The lake presented a strange appearance. A grey exhalation, drawn out of the rain-sodden, spummy soil by the heat of the sun, partially hid its surface; through it the salty incrustations glittered with a strange colourless shimmer. It may have been the vibration of the heated air, or it may have been the quivering of the rising mist, but

the whole surface of the lake seemed to be trembling and shaking.

"Ay; it's the curse," muttered old Scotty fearfully. "It's a drefful thing to see it; it drows the life out of you. It's always worse after the rain."

"Couldn't you walk across it now?" asked the child, gazing with a shudder at the misty waste.

"Walk! It's nothing but a hungry bog that would swallow you up. Nothing dare go on it now, after the rain. See how the sheep keep away from it. They know what a hidyus thing it is—and I know it too. Look at it shaking. Come away, child, or it'll blight you the same as it has done me."

The next day, as they were returning with the sheep, towards sundown, the crack of a whip, in the distance, suddenly broke the stillness of the bush.

"It's mother and father!" cried Lizzie, with a joyful cry. "Oh! they've come back at last."

She ran in the direction of the sound, leaving old Scotty to yard the sheep. Soon the creaking wheels sounded near at hand, and the dray slowly came into view, surmounting the last of the mulga ridges. When it stopped at length, before the tent left standing by the fences, the little girl, weeping bitterly, and with her hand clasped in that of Duke's mate, approached the old man.

"They've not come," she cried, sobbing pitifully. "It's only Larry come alone."

The man nodded to Scotty, and gave him the usual bush greeting.

"Yes, I'm by myself this time, Liz," he said. "But don't you cry. I've come to take you to mother."

"To take her away!" cried Scotty in a scared voice.

"Ay. Her mother's waiting for her at Gidanga. But I'll turn out the horses first. They've had a heavy time of it. I was near bailed up by the rain. Them mulga ridges are as soft as butter now; it was as much as the horses could do to pull the empty dray. They'll be glad of a spell."

He unharnessed the horses, and then, leading them down the gibbera hole for water, hobbled them out. Scotty watched him as though in a dream. It had come to an end, then, at last! The child was to be taken away from him. Their happy life together was over. He would see her no more; hear the sound of her voice and her happy laughter; hold her hand in his;

watch her untroubled sleep, no longer. She was to be taken from him. His feeble mind had hardly realised that such a day must come, in the end. Happy in her companionship, he had never thought of separation. It had seemed as if their peaceful, happy life must go on for ever. And now the evil day had come. He was to lose her. A terrible despair—all the more powerful by reason of its dreadful suddenness—took hold of him. Heart and brain felt numbed and stupefied. He uttered one hoarse cry; but that was all. His grief and despair were too deep for outward expression.

That evening, when little Lizzie had been laid tenderly to rest by the old shepherd, the fencer told his story.

"I didn't tell her," he said, seated on a wooden block before the fire, "because I didn't want to frighten her. But there's been an accident. Poor Duke's dead—crushed under the wheel of the dray. It was at the Culgoa crossing. There wasn't much water in the river, but the crossing-place is a bad one. I was in the dray holding his missis up, preventing her from being jolted, for it was nigh on her time, and she was very weak. The place was pretty steep and rough, and he was leadin' the horses down. There isn't a brake to the dray, and the leader fell, coming down on him. The wheel went right over poor Duke, crushin' his head in. He was dead when I jumped down and pulled him out. He never moved. It was orful sudden, poor fellow."

The old shepherd listened as though in a dream. He was dead, then—her father—and still they wanted to take her away from him.

"I took his missis into the township," Larry continued, "and poor Duke's body too. She had a bad time of it, poor soul; but I got her in safe to the doctor's, and she's there now. She's got a child—a boy, and I've come out to take little Liz to her. She isn't comin' back here now her old man's killed, and I ain't either. I've given up the fencin' contract, the boss allowing me and her for what work me and Duke did. She hadn't got the heart to come out here again, and I'm going to stop and take care of her. Duke and me were mates for nigh on five years, and I'm going to look after his missis and the kids. We're going to get married when she's better. So I've come out with the dray to get the tent and tools, and take little Liz back with me to Gidanga."

Poor Scotty! His paralysed mind hardly understood what the other was saying. Only one idea whirled through his brain. Her father was dead, and still they wanted to take the child from him.

"No, no," he exclaimed, answering his thoughts more than the other's words. "Don't take her away. Leave her with me."

"Leave her. What would I leave her for? Her mother wants her."

"But I want her," he cried in tones of agony. "I can't give her up. She's mine. I love her so. Oh, leave her with me."

The fencer looked with an air of astonishment at the trembling old man.

"Why, you're off your head, mate," he said, with rough good nature. "I suppose a mother can have her own gal. No; I can't leave her. I've come out special for her."

"I love her so, I love her so," muttered poor Scotty.

"Oh, you'll get over that. There's others coming out to take up the fencin'. There's a contractor coming with five or six men and his family. He's got four children. You'll find one of them to take up with."

Scotty made a hopeless gesture, and his head sank on his breast in mute despair.

"Well, I'll turn in, I'm pretty tired," said Larry, rising and laying his hand on the old man's shoulder. "Don't be down-hearted, mate. You'll soon take up with them others. I'm going to spell the horses for a couple of days. Then I'll pull down the tent, and load up and be off."

"Little Lizzie," murmured Scotty, wagging his head unmeaningly. "No, no; don't take her away."

The next two days were spent by the old shepherd in a state of pitiable collapse. The shock was so sudden that it seemed completely to take away the remnants of reason that remained to him. Almost for the first time during all those long years, he neglected his flock. He never went near it, but sat for hours together, holding the girl's hand in his; or else, when she ran away to join her newly-found companion, in gazing vacantly out at the Salt Lake. His mind seemed to be completely unhinged. He mumbled unmeaningly to himself; his head wagged from side to side; his bleared eyes were sometimes dimmed by moisture, sometimes lighted up by a gleam of excitement. At times he followed the child about like her shadow,

praying her in broken accents to stop with him, wildly offering her every inducement he could think of. At night he sat by her bed, gazing absorbedly at her peaceful face, listening to her regular breathing. He would sit motionless like that all through the night, listening, watching, bowed down with anguish and despair.

Towards the end of the second day a change came over him. He muttered constantly to himself; his hands and arms moved restlessly; his eyes gleamed with excitement. Her father was dead; why should she be taken from him? That was the one thought that surged through his mind. The man who had come to take her away was nothing to her; he should not have her. The old man's mutterings and his wild exclamations showed what was passing in his mind; but he made no further appeal to the fencer.

And so the evening of the second day came, and on the morrow Lizzie and her new protector were to take their departure. The tent had been struck and rolled up, the tools collected, the dray laden, and everything was ready for an early start at sunrise.

Scotty passed the night at the child's bedside, at first in dumb despair; then in gradually increasing excitement. It was the last night. In seven hours she would be taken from him—in six—in five. The thought was madness. Once he woke her gently to ask if she would not stop with him, and when she answered yes, fretful at being aroused, but knowing with childish intuition that that answer would satisfy him, a gleam of wild joy lighted up his face. After that he never stirred again during the whole of the night, but sat there with bowed head watching the sleeping child.

With the first grey streak of dawn a footstep outside the hut aroused him. It was the fencer, who had camped for the night under the dray.

"Hullo! You up?" he said, peering into the dark hut. "You're early. I'm going after the horses, for I want to make an early start. Make up the fire and put the billy on, will you? Liz and me have got a long day's journey before us. I'll wake her up. It's nearly time she got dressed."

It had come at last, then.

"No, no," cried Scotty, suddenly starting up and brandishing his arms in mad excitement; "leave her be. She's not going. She's going to stop with me; she said so."

"Goin' to stop with you! You're off your head. Here, get out of the way and let me pass."

"No, no; stand back."

The man made his way into the hut; but Scotty, whipping up the child from the bed, with a hoarse cry darted past him in the obscurity, and gained the door. Rudely awakened, little Lizzie began to cry.

"Where are you off to, you looney!" exclaimed the fencer. "Come back, will you?"

But the old shepherd, still grasping his burthen, ran quickly from the hut. Uttering a startled oath the man followed, trying to overtake him. Outside, a grey mist obscured everything. Nothing was visible but the nearest trees, standing shadowy and impalpable like phantom forms. The mulga ridges were veiled by the dense fog; the Salt Lake was nothing but an indistinguishable mass of shadows.

The old man's flying steps took him in the direction of the gibbera hole; he staggered along the top of the rock, the child crying bitterly in his arms. He did not seem to know where he was—his sole idea appeared to be to escape with his burthen from his pursuer. He staggered blindly across the plateau of rock, slippery with the fog.

A shrill cry broke from the fencer's lips, and he stopped suddenly, with blanched face.

"Stop, stop, you madman," he screamed. "The Salt Lake! The Salt Lake!"

Right beneath the feet of the flying shepherd curled the chill mists that hid the lake. But he did not seem to be conscious of anything. He staggered on, stumbled, recovered himself, and then tottered blindly over the edge, the crying child tightly pressed to his heart.

There was a loud scream from little Lizzie—a hideous, dead thud as man and child fell into the morass—a dull splash of the foul spume—a sickening gurgle as the choking slime closed over them—and then all was quiet. The Salt Lake had its victims at last.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 952. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER II. THE QUEEN OF WATERS.

THE table d'hôte was in full swing in the long dining-room of the Grand Hotel, with its mirrors of Venetian glass, and its glistening chandeliers, and that strange view of the water close to the long narrow windows. Faces of all nationalities looked stiffly, or friendly, or criticisingly at each other from opposite sides of the table. Voices in all languages chattered, and exchanged greetings or remarks.

Soup had been removed—there was a brief interval as the waiters were being told off to the different sections of the long table. A man, looking at the scene with keen observant eyes, noted that two places opposite his own seat were just being occupied. His glance—momentarily arrested—stayed as if grave deliberation had succeeded a first impression: stayed—wandered—returned again, as one returns to something pleasant or puzzling, and finally rested on the object of attraction with candid, but very unusual approval. A calm and serious nature, with a judgement rarely at fault, and a mind whose equable poise was rarely overbalanced by enthusiasm, it surprised himself that he should feel an interest so keen, an attraction so irresistible.

He saw only a girl in the very earliest spring-time of youth—a girl with a face that seemed to bring back all tender and gentle memories to a heart which had been sorely tried. A girl dressed in some soft dove-coloured fabric, with nothing about her

to bespeak aught but girlhood save the thick gold band upon one slender finger, and the jealous, observant care of the man by her side. "A wife—that child—it seems a sacrilege"—so ran the thoughts of that quiet observer; and again and again, try how he might, he found himself wondering—theorising—romancing about the girl-bride. He could have told how sweet a trick of colour flushed or paled in the delicate cheek, how lovely a dimple lurked at the corner of the sweet ripe mouth, what a silvery ripple of laughter it was that fell from her lips at some jest of her companion, and how the crown of hair that was wound in warm rich gold about the lovely head made him think of Guido's Magdalene.

Yet Adrian Lyle was by no means a man given to the study of women's looks, or to the folly of weaving romances in keeping with their beauty.

A remarkable-looking man—a man by no means in his first youth, and with marks of care and thought on the high grave brow—a man whose personal appearance suggested nothing of his calling, and yet who, when that calling was mentioned, seemed just to suit it. Such was the Rev. Adrian Lyle, sometime Curate in the parish of Scandalthorpe, Surrey, but now rustivating, or ruralising, or whatever may be the most suitable term for expressing that an over-zealous servant has incurred his superior's displeasure, without having come quite within the pale of that superior's spiritual jurisdiction. Adrian Lyle had been advocating strange doctrines—had spoken disrespectfully of sacerdotal garniture, and the folly of church millinery, as displayed in vestments, and sashes, and hoods, and stoles. He had objected to written sermons and the dry-as-dust pamphlets supposed to be eloquent of

"sound doctrine." He had thought that religion might have a cheerful side as well as a solemn one, and that it was better to preach love of heaven than fear of hell. Clerical manners—clerical dress—clerical voice, were to him an unnatural assumption of superiority for the sake of yielding to people's prejudices.

"A clergyman should be so-and-so—he always has been so-and-so—he always must be so-and-so." That was a string on which he did not love to harp, or hear other people harping. Therefore, because of these and many other little peculiarities which made his parishioners uncomfortable, and roused them from that pleasant lethargy which his predecessors had never discouraged, the Rev. Adrian Lyle had been graciously advised that his health was delicate—that so ardent a toiler in the vineyard must need some rest after the burden and heat of the day, and that a few months' reprieve from his labours would be graciously extended to him by his Rector.

Adrian Lyle could read between the lines as well as any one. But as it was useless to rebel, he accepted the pleasant little fiction of overwork, and resolved to extend and enlarge his ideas by a period of foreign travel. Keenly alive to all that was beautiful in Art and in Nature; with critical as well as cultivated tastes; he knew that neither he, nor his work, nor the necessities of his office would suffer for a temporary rest.

He wanted, indeed, to brace his energies for fear of a coming struggle, and so he had come to the very home and stronghold of priestcraft, determined to fathom its evils as well as admire its virtues. He was large-hearted and clear-headed enough to do both. The combination of qualities is somewhat rare.

The table d'hôte was half over when Adrian Lyle became suddenly aware that the lovely young bride was addressing himself. He started and collected his wits. Her husband was talking to a garrulous American who occupied the next seat. The beautiful young woman wanted some water, and the water-bottle stood beside Adrian Lyle. He bowed, and handed it across the table. She had spoken in German, but the tongue was perfectly familiar to him:

"Pardon me," he said, as he gave her the bottle, "are you aware that tourists are specially cautioned against drinking the water in Venice? It would be wiser if you mixed a little wine with it."

"But I never drink wine. I have never tasted it in my life," she said, in her pretty, frank way, and glanced appealingly at her husband.

He left his neighbour's last remark unanswered, and took up the subject, as brought under his notice by Adrian Lyle:

"You must not drink the water if it is impure. I shall have you laid up with typhoid fever, or something equally horrible. Thank you for the warning," he added politely to his opposite neighbour. "I had forgotten the caution in the guide-books."

He poured out half a glass of white Capri, and added a very little water, laughing heartily as Gretchen sipped it with evident distaste and not a little alarm.

"I am always reminded here of 'The Lay of the Ancient Mariner,'" said Adrian Lyle. "It really is a case of 'Water—water everywhere, and not a drop to drink.'"

Having broken the ice, he kept up a desultory conversation during the rest of the dinner. Neale Kenyon was not of that class of Englishman who brings his insular stiffness and prejudice on his travels, and looks upon an introduction as absolutely necessary to remarking that it is a fine day. He, therefore, chatted very readily and unconventionally with the young clergyman, perhaps not altogether sorry that he was able once more to exchange ideas in his native tongue.

Adrian Lyle, however, expected that the moment the meal was over the conversation would likewise terminate, and he rose from his seat and made the regulation bow, and sauntered into the entrance hall, where a few scattered groups were discussing the advisability of going on the water.

The glass doors opened on a narrow stone terrace, from which a flight of steps ran down to the water's edge. A fleet of gondolas were lying about. The moon was clear and brilliant, and lights flashed here and there over the wide canal.

Suddenly a burst of music broke forth, and a large "barca" shot out from the shadows of the houses and paused before the hotel. The groups broke up, the doors were thrown open—every one moved to the terrace to listen.

The barca was brilliant with coloured lights, and full of men and women, the latter bare-headed and picturesque, with masses of bright beads about their bare, brown throats. They sang some of the

"*rimi popolari*" of the people — wild rhythmic choruses, which suited well the scene, and echoed far and wide over the dark and quiet waters. Kenyon and Gretchen, who also stood on the terrace, thought it delightful. The night air, however, was slightly chill, and Kenyon felt her shiver. Being still in the lover-like stage of husbandhood, when not a look, or gesture, or sensation of the beloved one is disregarded, he immediately hastened to fetch her cloak, and the girl was left by herself leaning over the stone balustrade, and listening with eager delight to the tenor, who had just stood up to sing a solo.

Some one said to her very gently, "Will you permit me to offer you this wrap? The night air in Italy is very keen and chill, especially in the early spring."

She looked up. It was the English clergyman. "I thank you," she said, in her pretty, formal German, "but my husband has just gone upstairs for my cloak."

"Then let me put this on those cold stones for you to lean upon," he said, and suited the action to the word. The pretty half-bare arms looked prettier still leaning on that dark fur, and when she laughed and thanked him as simply as a child might have done, he was conscious of the strangest feeling that his life had ever experienced. A vague sense, as of misfortune to come — a sensation that half repelled and half allured — a thrill almost of fear, as if an invisible presence stood at hand, unseen but felt — such were the elements of that feeling, strangled in their birth, dismissed with the petulance and impatience that any reasoning and reasonable mind bestows upon pre-sentiments.

He did not speak to her again. He stood a little aside, and listened to the rich, melodious voice that blent itself with the faint wind and the sobbing of the water, as it rose and fell against the marble steps.

He listened, but the music was to him as an unknown tongue, and he was only conscious of saying over and over again: "What do the eyes of that child fore-tell?"

"Here is your cloak, my darling. I am afraid I have been very long, but Bari detained me."

It was Kenyon who spoke, and Adrian Lyle saw him wrap the rich furs round the pretty girlish figure, and watched the two pairs of eyes meet in a long and passionate glance — watched — and sighed

involuntarily, as we sigh over a glimpse of happiness that is not for ourselves, and that, half unconsciously, we envy.

"That gentleman was kind enough to lend me this," said Gretchen, handing the coat back to Kenyon. "Will you tell him I do not need it now?"

Kenyon turned, and saw his acquaintance of the *table d'hôte*. That fact made his thanks warmer than they might otherwise have been. Adrian Lyle was Gretchen's possible saviour from typhoid fever, and, as such, to be cordially received.

Their conversation was resumed, though Gretchen could only play the part of listener, and resolve to make haste and study the English language attentively.

The music ceased, the performers came round for contributions, murmuring courteous thanks, as the coins dropped thick and fast. Then the *barca* was pushed off, followed by quite an attendant fleet of gondolas, and Gretchen and Kenyon and their new friend seated themselves in the chairs, and the conversation became general.

Adrian Lyle's nature was essentially an attractive one, attractive by reason of its strength; its clear-headedness; the total absence of anything like artificiality; and the beautiful, large-souled charity which never lapsed into harsh judgement, even of what was erring and weak.

To a man like Kenyon, who was not by any means heroic, though well-meaning, and to whom the approbation of his fellow men was dear, there was something very pleasing about a companionship that at once put him on good terms with himself. The young man's good-nature had been rather a stumbling-block in his life. He hated to give pain, or to seem disobliging, and he hated to be pained himself. Principle was not his strong point, though he consoled himself for any evasion or lapse by saying "there were many fellows worse;" but this was negative praise, and of little use in any question of self-mastery. When, however, he talked to Adrian Lyle he felt an agreeable conviction that he was both clever and well-informed, and justified in being on the best possible terms with himself. The conversation had been quite impersonal. No disagreeable questions had been asked as to his position or affairs. Gretchen had been softly inveigled into talk after a while, and had acquitted herself to his satisfaction, though, no doubt, she was very childish; but then, it was such an enchanting childishness that no man would

have rebuked it, even were he less in love than Kenyon.

At last she proclaimed herself tired, and went off to bed, and Kenyon remained smoking and talking to his new friend, and arranging the various ways and means of "doing" the sights of the city.

There was no hurry. They could take them as easily as they chose. They had a month to idle away over churches and picture galleries, instead of the proverbial week of the frenzied tourists. And Adrian Lyle drew out a short and interesting programme for the first day, and even gave a half promise to play cicerone for it before they parted for the night.

Then they exchanged cards and shook hands very heartily; but after Kenyon had left him, Adrian Lyle, in a sudden fit of restlessness, called a gondola and went out over the dark quiet waters of the Grand Canal. He watched the lights die out, the mists arise, the soft hush and peace of night steal over the sleeping city, and gradually the spell of its calm stole over himself. It was long past midnight when he came back to the hotel. A solitary figure was standing by the steps smoking. It drew back to let the visitor pass. Adrian Lyle gave one of his quick, searching glances at the face. Then he started, and looked again, but the man had turned his back.

"Who is that Italian?" Lyle asked of the porter, in English.

"That!" and the man followed the glance of the keen bright eyes somewhat stupidly—"oh! that—he is the attendant—valet—courier—what you call—of Milord Kenyon, who arrived to-day."

"Kenyon's servant," muttered Adrian Lyle as he walked on and ascended the stairs. "Hum—I must be mistaken! It can't be the man I thought. I am getting fanciful, I do believe!"

CHAPTER III. MOONLIGHT AND ROMANCE.

"WE have been here a whole week," said Gretchen, leaning out of her window and looking over the broad expanse of rippleless water. "And it has rained almost every day. Mr. Lyle is right when he speaks of 'water—water everywhere.'"

"Yes!" said Kenyon, raising himself lazily on one arm from the couch where he was stretched. "I don't know what we should have done without him. And he has really taught you some English at last."

"He makes me say the name of everything

in English that I want to know," said Gretchen laughing. "It is so funny; only I cannot what you call—construct—say sentences yet."

"That will come all in good time," said Kenyon graciously. "You are very quick at picking up things, my child."

"Am I?" she said, looking pleased at his praise. "Oh I am so glad. I have always feared you might think me stupid. Indeed I think I am, for I cannot remember half of what we have seen, or the names of those pictures you have told me are so famous; and I look at the guide-book and I say I have seen San Marco, and the Doges' Palace, and the Campanile; I have been in Santa Maria della Salute, and the Frari; I have gazed at Canova's Monument, and Titian's altar-pieces, and the Church of the Jesuits; I have wandered over the Rialto Bridge, and roamed through the Accademia della Bella Arti; and yet when I begin to think of what I have seen, I get quite confused. Now, Mr. Lyle can tell you the chief point of interest in each place, and the very pictures in the Doges' Palace, while I only remember the ceilings! Ah! but; Neale, are they not grand, those ceilings! And what rooms! How I should love to have seen them peopled by those wonderful nobles in their pomp and pride!"

"A pomp and pride that at best was very insecure," remarked Kenyon. "Fancy some one stealing up the 'Giant's Staircase' and just popping a letter in the lion's mouth. Then suspicion—spying—denouncing. Once denounced, the victim is seized—examined—sentenced. Nothing is heard again of his fate. He disappears. On the whole, my love, the Venetian nobles had not such a good time of it as you may suppose. To be of high rank and hold an office of State was to be an object of suspicion, jealousy, intrigue, and often a victim of treachery. But enough of Venetian history. Lyle has been at it all day. What does the weather look like to-night?"

"It is beautiful—superb!" cried Gretchen eagerly. "And warm too, no summer. Will you take me out in a gondola to follow the 'Campagna dei pittori,' as you have so often promised?"

"You can't say it is too cold to-night!"

"Very well," assented Kenyon; "and we will go by ourselves, and leave Lyle behind for once. I must say, though, he is chary enough of his company. He has never come anywhere with us unasked."

"He is very nice," said Gretchen simply, "and very clever, and very kind."

"Don't praise him too much, or I shall be jealous," laughed Kenyon, coming over to her side as she still leant against the open casement.

"Jealous," she echoed, regarding him with a little puzzled frown. "What does that mean?"

"It means that you are to have no thought or admiration for any one but me," he answered smiling, as his lips kissed the pretty, puckered brow. "Is that hard to understand?"

"Oh, no; very easy," she sighed. "Indeed, I think it is because my heart is so full of you that I cannot remember half of what I see or hear. The Dandolos, and Faliro, and Barbarossa, and all the other great and celebrated people fade into utter insignificance beside you, and my memory of you, and all the great and wonderful happiness you have brought into my life."

He kissed her hurriedly, but he did not meet her eyes.

"If we stay here talking we shall miss the music," he said. "I think I hear your favourite tenor already."

Adrian Lyle was standing on the terrace when he saw the two well-known figures approaching. Kenyon summoned one of the hotel gondolas, and assisted his wife in. They both nodded to their new friend, but gave him no invitation to join them.

"We are going to follow the music," said Gretchen, in her clear, young voice; and then the gondoliers raised their oars, and the black and gold prow of the gondola glided slowly from sight.

For a moment his grave eyes followed it musingly and half sadly. Then he summoned another with but a single rower, and, drawing his broad felt hat down over his eyes, followed in the wake of that dusky shape, whose gold prow flashed like a beacon in the clear, pale moonlight.

Gretchen had thrown herself back on the soft cushions; her hand stole into Kenyon's; her soft eyes drank in the magic and beauty of the scene with all a child's wonder and enjoyment of what is seen for the "first time."

There is no after sorcery to compare with the magic of those words.

Coloured lights were flashing over the water, revealing dusky palaces; the dark, gliding shapes of gondolas shot hither and thither, or idly floated like their own. Kenyon had ordered the men to row them beyond the usual extent of the "water-

drive," and, after a while, they found themselves approaching the mirage-like Islands of the Lagoona. Here the water was almost deserted, and the far-off stretch of the Euganean Hills looked like a shadowy belt set in a silver frame of snow and moonlight.

The gondoliers paused on their oars. A soft shadow of cloud passed over the sky, enveloping the scene in a cloak of mystic darkness; a darkness relieved here and there by some straggling moonbeam.

A moment, and then the stillness was broken. The hushed air seemed to tremble with a sound that thrilled the very darkness, the sound of a great and glorious human voice. Gretchen started and caught her breath, but the words she would have uttered died on her lips, and left her tranced in the ecstasy of listening.

The soul of the singer seemed to fill that throbbing melody and let itself loose in passionate prayer—prayer that rose in higher, and purer, and grander utterance till the waves of sound found wings that bore it upwards to the vaulted sky, and there its last faint echo died.

Gretchen turned to her husband. The tears were falling down her cheeks; her lips were pale and trembling.

"Oh!" she cried, "who is it? What is it? It seems to draw me, and draw me like invisible hands. It is like nothing earthly at all."

"No, it is not," he answered, also strangely moved. "But, no doubt, it is one of the singers from the churches. Some of them have magnificent voices. I daresay he is trying the effect of some new mass."

"I did not think there could be such a voice, except in Heaven," Gretchen said softly, and her eyes tried to pierce the shrouding darkness. There were two or three barcas and a gondola or two scattered about. Doubtless the music had attracted them, but they began to drift away one after the other, and Kenyon ordered his own men back by way of the Canareggio. "Ah," he sighed contentedly, as he looked at Gretchen's lovely face, "this is Venice as it should be. The Venice of one's dreams. Moonlight—music—fair women—love. It is like a dream. Even you"—and he touched her hand softly—"even you look like a dream."

She turned to him with soft and serious eyes. "Let us go on dreaming," she said. "Paint me a picture of what Venice was."

"Very well," he said, meeting her fancy

with equal readiness. "Time has gone back—she is still Queen of the Adriatic. In yonder Palazzo rules some mighty Doge. He steps down the marble stairway to where the gilded and canopied gondola of state awaits him. It is a gala night. From every marble palace, and at every flight of steps glide forth the gondolas of the nobles. They advance and float in stately procession over the glittering waters. Can you not see the fairy fleet, brilliant with lights and costly robes and dazzling jewels, and the beauty of fair women? The air is full of music, and voices rise and fall with the silvery cadence of its rhythm. In yonder gondola, with its dusky hood, some fair dame reclines, her beauty jealously hidden from the crowd's admiring eyes. Some one is beside her. Her lover—or a bridegroom newly wedded. He is whispering vows of eternal adoration. In the soft gloom her liquid eyes look up to meet his own. He takes her white hand and raises it to his lips. He tells her all else is a dream but love, such love as theirs—for they are young, and the world is very fair, and life—ah, how beautiful life can be when one loves!"

The dying cadence of some distant music fell across his last words like a sigh, and a momentary silence reigned in that charmed region of moonlight and romance. Kenyon's eyes sought that sweet child-face. "Why, Gretchen, tears?" he murmured in surprise. "Have my fancies made you sad?"

"Oh, no," she said, half smiling, and shaking the bright drops from her long lashes; "not sad, only——"

"Only what, sweetheart?"

"Does love—last?" she asked, timidly raising the childish eyes to his; but they were not childish now, only very earnest and very solemn.

"Of course it does," he answered her, "such love as ours. What could change that, my own?"

"I do not know," she answered, simply. "Nothing, it seems now; but those lovers of whom you spoke—they too were happy once, and on these same waters breathed these same words of ours! And yet——"

"But they are dead, sweetheart, and so love is over for them."

"Ah, no," she interrupted quickly. "Do not say that, Neale. Love cannot die, it seems to me. For it is of the soul, and the soul lives, and all in it that is pure and beautiful and true lives also, and, if I died to-night, I know I should take to heaven your memory and my thoughts of you, and

there they would be with me, waiting—waiting—till God gave you back to me again."

A child—well, Neale Kenyon had called her that and thought of her as that often enough, but as he listened to her words and looked down at the rapt and serious face, he knew that it was no child's heart he had won to his keeping, no child's soul that looked forth from those softly solemn eyes. And just as a child's innocent words touch boldly the key-note of some long-hidden truth, so did Gretchen's words strike loud and clear the chords of an unchanging faith and thrill his soul with their haunting echoes.

"You love me far too well," he muttered hoarsely. "Indeed, child, I am not worth it. No man is."

"But you are, or I believe you so, and that is enough for me. How you have changed all my life! Why, you are like a magician who suddenly says 'Wish,' and then everything is beautiful. I know life cannot always be a dream, but I am too happy to wake—yet. I cannot fancy that such things as sorrow, and shame, and misery exist; but I am sure that men and women can become great and heroic through love, for it makes one strong and brave, and ready to dare all things. See how brave it made me!"

The innocent words were like a dagger thrust. He laughed a little constrainedly. "My child, you are like all your sex, only too ready to deify your idol of clay. You won't reason, you only feel."

"You have told me there is no reason in love."

"No more there is, sweetheart. A man's general strength of character may serve him in most other cases, but when he loves he is mastered."

"As you were, Neale?"

"As I was, little witch, and as many another of my sex has been, and still is to be."

"Mr. Lyle says a man can never do anything at variance with his nature. If it is weak, shifty, false, so will it control and guide his actions."

"Ah—Mr. Lyle," muttered Kenyon. "He is a different type of man from me. All characters are not alike, any more than all natures. As one is, one is. It is absurd to expect a man to be self-denying, heroic, unselfish, when Nature has denied him the very faculties needful for such virtues. As well blame him that his features are not classical, or his height falls short of ma-

justy. Now, Adrian Lyle is a man cut out on grand lines. He is meant for great things, and he unconsciously dwarfs ordinary mortals into insignificance or meanness. He can't help doing it. Those grand eyes of his look beyond the mere level of petty human motives and soar to heights that dazzle ordinary powers of vision. Mr. Lyle could not do a mean or selfish action. He simply could not. But then what it costs him nothing to avoid, it might cost a weaker nature a lifetime of struggling and suffering. The human mind is a very complex machine, my child. Some people never master its mechanism, and are consequently always more or less faulty of action. Others can dissect, organise, arrange it at a glance, and with scarce an effort."

"Well," said Gretchen, with a little sigh, "if your character is not as grand as Mr. Lyle's, it is more sympathetic, and you do not frighten me as he does."

"Does he frighten you, sweet?"

"He is so very, very good," she answered gravely. "And I think, if he knew what I have done, and how I deceived and disobeyed my relatives, he would think me very wicked."

"For Heaven's sake," cried Kenyon hurriedly, "don't ever tell him anything about—that. Surely he hasn't asked you?"

"Oh, no, he never asks one anything—only leads one on to tell him what is in one's heart. I would not mind confessing anything to him, but I dread having to tell the priests."

"You must confess only to me now," said Kenyon tenderly. "I will not have any other man, be he twenty times a priest, stepping between your heart and mine."

"And I do not wish it—now," she answered with sudden passion, as she turned her eyes to his. "For you are all in all to me—lover, husband, priest; sometimes, I think, my heaven too, for there would be no heaven for me where you were not."

"Oh, hush, hush!" he cried. "Do not say such things. Indeed I am not worth thoughts like yours; and some day—some day——"

"No, no," she interrupted; "for us there must be no 'some day' when I shall regret or you will repent. Love like ours can never change and never die."

It was the old, sweet story in its oldest, sweetest form. The young idolatry of passion—the first outspiring of a nature formed to love, and to love with the

blindness, and the pathos, and the trust, that are at once love's blessing and love's curse.

The cold years of isolation had but left her all the more eager for tenderness and sympathy, and lent to both a spell far stronger than they would otherwise have held. Such love as surrounded her now was like a charmed and sacred thing. Its beauty grew with every hour; its sanctity with every thought. The leaves of her soul opened one by one, as a flower to the sunlight; and drank in joy, and colour, and fragrance, with each day that passed.

The change that had come to her sometimes startled Kenyon himself. It was as if a lovely statue had warmed and blushed with life, and moved beside him, drinking in new thoughts, new hopes, new raptures every hour. Her whole face and form had gained new loveliness, and seemed to thrill with the glory and gladness of the life she breathed; and, with this new-created glow and fire throbbing in brain and pulse, she would turn to the creator of it all in one dumb, passionate impulse of worship, and weep for very joy upon his breast.

He was her world—her life. He might have been her soul and conscience too, had he so willed. In the limitless adoration she yielded, his word was her law. It might have made a great nature humble to be so loved; but to a lesser one the consciousness of so little meriting it, was a constantly-recurring sting.

Kenyon would rather she loved him as other women had loved him. Poor, blind little Gretchen! who thought that for him the world had never even held "other women"—that she to him, as he to her, was "first and last and all."

They had been silent a long time. Their gondola had drifted away from the track of the others. In the violet dusk of the sky the stars had slowly gathered, lighting it from end to end with profuse and prodigal brilliance.

"Do you know, Gretchen," said Kenyon suddenly, "that I have often longed to ask you a question; only, somehow, I feared you would not understand? You know nothing of social conventionalities. Right or wrong to you are simply based on feeling; not on the prejudices of the world. Is your love of the nature that would make sacrifices?—that would only ask to make me happy, and, doing so, find its highest content?"

"Yes," she answered simply. "Failing your happiness, it would seek nothing more

on earth. You are my world—my life too, I think."

Her voice trembled greatly, and his own was not steady either, as it answered those wistful, passionate words:

"And you shall be my world too. There is something sacred in a mutual vow, dear heart, and love like ours is sacred, as neither form nor rite could make it. You—you do not understand. No; why should you? You would not be happy without me—ah, I know it!—nor I without you. And life is a poor thing at best, and its chances of happiness are few. Let us hold ours fast and close while we can."

And something in her heart seemed to echo, cold and chill, "while we can!"

PARACELSUS.

A NAME more or less familiar to those who dive into quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore; a name also not unfamiliar to that somewhat nebulous personage, "the general reader;" a name, too, with a fine alchemical flavour and mysterious suggestiveness; but a name not conveying much in the way of impression and association to ordinary individuals.

Who and what was Paracelsus? Is it a real name, or the assumed name of a real personage? If assumed, what does it mean? If our readers will follow us for a little, we will endeavour to throw some light upon a dark but yet curiously-interesting subject.

"Paracelsus," according to Robert Brown- ing, "thought, at the age of twenty, that knowledge was the summum bonum, and retired to a seat of learning to acquire it. But at twenty-eight he was still unsatisfied, and then made acquaintance with an Italian poet, who induced him to seek the summum bonum in love. Again he was dissatisfied and disappointed, and finally resolved to devote himself 'to know and to enjoy.'"

This, it must be confessed, is not very informing; so let us try another instructor. "Paracelsus," says Dr. Brewer, "is reported to have kept a small devil in the pommel of his sword, and he favoured metallic substances for medicines, while Galen preferred herbs." Here, then, we may gather some light, for we gain a distinct impression of a Medical Practitioner upon reformed methods, with a spice of the supernatural. This, in brief, was the characteristic of the real Paracelsus, who was not quite the same personage as the Paracelsus of Brown- ing. But what of that?

"The life of every man," wrote Carlyle, in describing a modernised and corrupted version of the great Paracelsus, in the person of the infamous Cagliostro, "the life even of the meanest man, it were good to remember, is a poem; perfect in all manner of Aristotelian requisites; with beginning, middle, and end; with perplexities and solutions; with its Will- strength and warfare against Fate; its elegy and battle singing, courage marred by crime, everywhere the two tragic elements of Pity and Fear; above all, with supernatural machinery enough—for was not the man born out of Nonentity? did he not die, and, miraculously vanishing, return thither?"

Sir Thomas Browne, himself a physician, is very severe upon Paracelsus, whose, "singularity" he characterises as "intolerable," because "he hath reviled, not only the authors but almost all the learning that went before him." This, indeed, seems to have been the great mistake of our medicine- man, and was the cause of all his woes. Yet more men than Paracelsus, and more recently, have found the unwisdom of oppos- ing the doctrines and principles of a whole faculty of medicine. But, curiously enough, the learned physician of Norwich was dis- posed to regard as more "veritable" those pretensions of "the philosopher's stone, pot- able gold, or any of those arcana, whereby Paracelsus, that died himself at forty-seven, gloried that he could make other men im- mortal."

We shall see about these pretensions presently; meanwhile, let us not forget to mark with regard to the same, that old Sir Thomas Browne considered them, "al- though extremely difficult, and tantum non infesible; yet are they not impossible; nor do they (rightly understood) impose any violence on Nature."

Concerning the little devil in the pommel of the sword, old Burton, who wrote the "Anatomy of Melancholy," was also ex- ercised. But he thought it not at all im- probable, for, said he, "the air is not so full of flies in summer as it is at all times of invisible devils. They counterfeit suns and moons, and sit on ships' masts; they cause whirlwinds of a sudden, and tempe- stuous storms, which, though our meteor- ologists generally refer to natural causes, yet I am of Bodine's mind, they are more often caused by those aerial devils in their several quarters." Cardan's father, he avers, had "an aerial devil bound to him for eight-and-twenty years;" "others wear

them in rings." Why then should not Paracelsus "wear" one in the pommel of his sword?

Why not, indeed, since, as Mr. Moncure Conway reminds us, in ages past every successive discovery of science, and every invention of material benefit to man, was believed by priest-ridden peoples to have been secured by compact with the devil? As Prometheus was "suppressed" by Jove, so, in the Middle Ages, were many men engaged in legitimate scientific research, "suppressed" by the priests. The taint of sorcery hung round every effort to acquire knowledge out of the customary channels. We need only recall one instance in our own country—Roger Bacon, with regard to whom, "in the priestly whisper the chemist's crucible grew to a wizard's cauldron."

Thomas De Quincey wrote a learned essay with the object of proving that Freemasonry is neither more nor less than Rosicrucianism modified by those who transplanted it into England. The original Freemasons, he contended, were a society which arose out of the Rosicrucian mania, between 1633 and 1646, and their object was Magic in the Kabbalistic sense—that is, "the occult wisdom transmitted from the beginning of the world and matured by Christ; to communicate this when they had it, to search for it when they had it not, and both under an oath of secrecy." The interest of this hypothesis to us just now rests on this, that Rosicrucianism was the direct outgrowth of the system of Kabbalism, Theosophy, and Alchemy, which in the sixteenth century had spread pretty well over all Europe. Its centre, however, was in Germany, and the man who did most, by teaching and writing, to spread the movement was Paracelsus. One of the principal "Kabbalistic conceits"—which were drawn from the prophecies of the Old Testament—was that in the seventeenth century "a great and general reformation was believed to be impending over the human race, as a necessary forerunner to the day of judgment." Paracelsus, who predicted the comet of 1572, characterised it as the sign and harbinger of the approaching revolution, and "thus fixed upon it the expectation and desire of a world of fanatics." But another prophecy of Paracelsus still more associates him with the Rosicrucians, and inferentially with the Freemasons. He predicted that soon after the death of the Emperor Rudolph there would be found

"three treasures that had never been revealed before that time."

De Quincey points out how, in or about 1610, there appeared three curious books which "in a very strange way led to the foundation of the Rosicrucian order as a distinct society." But as it is with Paracelsus, and not with the order of the Rosy Cross, that he have to do at present, we must refer the reader who desires to pursue the subject to De Quincey's remarkable essay.

The association here indicated, however, serves to explain the adoption of the curious surname—Paracelsus. It was not a family or baptismal name, but was adopted, or invented, by Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim. Its meaning is taken to be expressive of superiority to Celsus, the first writer against Christianity and a Platonist, who did not believe in the supernatural. The significance of the name adopted by Theophrastus Bombast will be seen, when it is understood that his design was to reform the Church of Christ by alliance with the occult—to wed magic with religion, medicine with morals. "The beginning of wisdom is the beginning of supernatural power," this was his own maxim.

The history and doctrines of this remarkable man—even De Quincey owned that amidst all his follies he must ever be accounted "extraordinary in the annals of the human mind"—used to have powerful attraction for the present writer in years past. Quite recently the memory of former studies has been revived by the appearance of a book from the pen of Dr. Franz Hartmann, professing to give the life and the substance of the teachings of Paracelsus. It is somewhat of a chaotic book, and is deeply tinged with Spiritualism, Mysticism, and a variety of other "isms." But we may cull something from it, and from other sources, which will interest our readers, and perhaps suggest a new line of thought to them.

Dr. Hartmann, it may be observed, differs from some of the encyclopædias and biographies as to the date of the birth of Paracelsus. He gives it as 1493, while others put it at 1490 and 1491, but the point is not material, except to persons of severe accuracy. The place of birth was a village some two hours' walk from Zurich, called Maria-Einsiedeln—or more familiarly Einsiedeln—now "a place of pilgrimage."

The family, however, was German and of ancient line—the Bombasts von Hohenheim—Hohenheim being an ancient castle at Plinningen, near Stuttgart. One George Bombast von Hohenheim was Grand Master of the Knights of St. John.

So much for family: now for profession. The father of Paracelsus was William Bombast von Hohenheim, who, having studied medicine, went to Einsiedeln to establish himself as a physician. He there married the matron of the hospital belonging to the Abbey, and the only child of the union was Theophrastus.

From his father, Paracelsus learned the rudiments of alchemy, surgery, and medicine, and always revered his memory as not merely his parent but also his friend and teacher. Further instruction he obtained at a monastery in the Valley of the Savon, and later at the University of Bâle. Leaving college, he placed himself under the Abbot Trithemius of Spanheim at Wurzburg—one of the greatest adepts of his day in magic, alchemy, and astrology—and then entered the laboratory of the celebrated alchemist, Sigismund Fugger, at Schwatz in Tyrol, who, says Dr. Hartmann, taught Paracelsus "many a valuable secret." Thus, then, was the Alchemist both born and made.

This is important to remember, since alchemy is defined as a science by which things may not only be decomposed, but recomposed, and also by which their essential natures may be changed and raised higher, or be transmuted into each other. Chemistry, we are told, deals with dead matter alone, but alchemy uses life as a factor. There is a threefold nature, it seems, in everything, and the material and objective forms are but the lowest manifestations. There is, for instance, both solid, visible, material gold, and immaterial, spiritual, ethereal, and invisible "astral" gold—that is to say, both gold matter and gold spirit or soul. By employing the spiritual powers of one's own soul, one may so manipulate the spiritual powers of the soul of the material object as to give them visible form. But to do this one must use alchemical processes, and these, we are assured, can only be undertaken by one who is an alchemist by birth and education. Hence, the peculiar advantage enjoyed by the renowned Paracelsus.

To return, however, to the incidents of his life. In or about 1525, Paracelsus went to Bâle, and was there appointed by

the City Council Professor of Physic, Medicine, and Surgery, with a considerable salary. He at once set about delivering a course of lectures, in which he overturned all the doctrines of Galen and the accepted authorities, and laid down doctrines of his own. He also, in his capacity of City Physician, introduced a rule for the supervision of all the apothecaries of the city—that they should be subjected to an examination as to their personal fitness for the business, and that their drugs should be inspected so as to ensure purity and moderation in prices. As a consequence, all the doctors and druggists of the place were roused to enmity against him, and notwithstanding his successes in treating disease, he was, after a couple of years obliged to "leave Bâle secretly and hurriedly, in order to avoid unpleasant complications." In short, he had to fly for his life, and for the next ten years was a wanderer on the face of the earth. At one time he tried to settle as a physician in Nuremberg, yet, although he effected some remarkable cures there, he was soon forced to leave that place also. In his wanderings he traversed all Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, found his way to Constantinople, to Russia, to Tartary, and even, it is said, to India. It is certain that he imbibed somewhere the doctrines of Occultism of the East, and it has been lately pointed out what remarkable similarity there is between the system of Paracelsus and that of the modern school of Theosophy which has grown up in India. With regard to the "sevenfold principles of man," "the qualities of the astral body," "the Elementals," and so forth, the works of Paracelsus give almost the same information as one may find in "Isis Unveiled" and "Esoteric Buddhism."

In 1541 he was invited by Duke Ernest of Bavaria, himself a student of the secret arts, to settle in Salzburg, but he lived there only a few months, and died at the age of forty-eight (not forty-seven, as Sir Thomas Browne said). Of his death there are conflicting accounts. One is that he died in a drunken brawl; another, that he was killed by a fall received in a scuffle with the emissaries of his old enemies, the physicians. What is the truth will probably never be known; but an examination of his skull after death revealed a fracture, and there is no conclusive evidence that he was of intemperate habits. On the contrary, the nature of his studies and the vast volume of his writings

would indicate the necessity of the reverse of such habits.

That he should have had many enemies is not to be wondered at, when we remember, as Dr. Hartmann tells us, that "he overthrew the customary old-foggism of the orthodox physicians and speculative philosophers of his age; he proclaimed new and, therefore, unwelcome ideas; and he defended his mode of thinking in a manner that was rather forcible than polite." On the other hand, we cannot recommend any one to accept Dr. Hartmann's estimate of Paracelsus, who seems to suffer as much by the exaggeration of his disciples as by that of his opponents. Paracelsus was neither perfect sage and infallible philosopher; nor altogether quack, charlatan, and impostor. He was a Christian, and generally attempted to support his doctrines on those of the Bible; and he was a physician skilled beyond the medical science of his day. It was the aim of Paracelsus, as another writer has said, "to promote the progress of medicine, and to set before physicians a high ideal." It is notable that the science of therapeutics owes more to Paracelsus, than its modern practitioners realise or acknowledge. He is credited by some with the introduction of opium into Western medical practice; and it is claimed for him by others that, long before Mesmer, he discovered the mysterious force which is now known as mesmerism. On the one side, he introduced a wide application of chemical ideas to pharmacy and therapeutics; on the other, he neutralised much of the good he might have been capable of by his adherence to the Kabbala, which supposes a connection of every part of the world of man with a corresponding part in the great world of nature. Macrocosmos is the universe, including all visible and invisible things. Microcosmos is the smaller world within. Man is a microcosm compared with the earth, and a macrocosm compared with an atom of matter; but everything contained in a macrocosm in a state of developement is contained in a microcosm in germ. That is to say, life pervades alike animate and what we call inanimate Nature; it is also the cause of matter and force. Nothing is without life, there is no dead in Nature, and nothing lies in Nature. "There is nothing corporeal which does not possess a soul hidden in it. There exists nothing in which is not a hidden principle of life. Not only ~~animals, and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, but all corporeal and essential things have life.~~"

animals, and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, but all corporeal and essential things have life." "Matter is, so to say, coagulated smoke, and is connected with spirit by an intermediate principle which it receives from the Spirit. This intermediate link between matter and spirit belongs to all three kingdoms of Nature."

This, then, is the germ of the philosophy of Paracelsus, who, applying it to medicine, thus wrote: "I have reflected a great deal upon the magical powers of the soul of man, and I have discovered a great many secrets in Nature, and I will tell you that he only can be a true physician who has acquired this power. If our physicians did possess it, their books might be burnt, and their medicines be thrown into the ocean, and the world would be all the more benefited by it. Magic inventrix finds everywhere what is needed and more than will be required." Thus he sought, in dealing with diseased organisms, to re-establish the "necessary equilibrium," to restore the lost vitality by attracting the vital principles from living objects and powers.

There is an old Brahminical doctrine that the world came into existence as an egg, laid in water by Brahm, the Spirit of Wisdom. Paracelsus seized upon and symbolised this doctrine, saying that, by the decomposition of the essence, a mucilage is formed, containing the germs of all life, out of which both the lower and the higher organisms are formed.

Then as to man. Man, he says, is a spirit, and has two bodies, an elementary and a sidereal one. When a man dies, his elementary body returns to the elements of the earth, but his sidereal body remains, after a certain process of decomposition, to haunt the residence of the deceased, and otherwise to follow his accustomed tracks. This is pretty much the doctrine of modern Spiritualism.

But we must not confound Magic with Sorcery. Paracelsus is very severe on sorcerers, yet "true magic" he esteemed "the greatest of all natural sciences, because it includes a knowledge of visible and invisible Nature. Besides being a science, it is also an art, and cannot be learned out of books, but must be acquired by practical experience." "Magic," he says, "is the greatest wisdom and the knowledge of supernatural powers. A knowledge of spiritual things cannot be obtained by merely reasoning logically

from external appearances existing on the physical plane, but it may be acquired by obtaining more spirituality, and making oneself capable to feel and to see the things of the spirit. It would be well if our clergymen, who are called spiritual guides, would know more of spiritual things than what they have read in their books; and if they had some practical experience in divine wisdom, instead of merely repeating the opinions of 'divines.' From this it will be seen that Paracelsus desired to reform the Church as well as physic by means of "true magic;" but without a strong faith and a powerful imagination, we are assured, no one can enter the Temple of Magic. One may reasonably wonder which of the two requisites should preponderate. Dr. Hartmann appears to have both qualities in excess, for he gravely narrates incidents of "bewitched cattle," etc., in this nineteenth century, within his own knowledge, and personally vouched for by him as authentic!

But let us come down from these mystic heights before our readers grow bewildered in the rarefied atmosphere. We want to know something about alchemy and astrology.

Chemistry, we are told, deals with physical matter, and may be learned by any one with ordinary intellect and application. Alchemy deals with the astral principles of matter, and is an art which cannot be understood without spiritual knowledge.

Astronomy, again, deals with the physical aspect of planets and stars, and may be studied by any one able to comprehend mathematics, and who possesses logic and physical sight. Astrology deals with the psychic influences which the souls of planets and stars exert upon each other, and upon the microcosm of man, and is incomprehensible to those who cannot feel the influences of the stars.

The highest aspect of alchemy is "the transformation of vices into virtues, by the fire of love for the good, the purification of the mind by suffering, the elevation of the divine principle of man over the animal elements of his soul." Astrology, again, is intimately connected with medicine, magic, and alchemy; but Paracelsus was not a professional astrologer, and scornfully rejected the doctrine that the course of the stars can affect the fate of a man.

He revelled more in alchemy in alliance

with astrology. Thus, certain substances have the power to absorb and retain planetary influences, and in this way "magic mirrors" may be prepared. "If," says Paracelsus, "we make a composition of seven metals in the proper order and at the proper time, we will obtain a metal which contains all the virtues of the seven. Such a composition is called 'electrum.' It contains not only the physical but the astral virtues of the seven metals that enter into its composition, and the electrum is one of the most valuable preparations known to secret science. The ordinary metals cannot be compared with it on account of its magic power. A vessel made of the electrum will immediately indicate if any poisonous substance has been surreptitiously put into it, because it will begin to sweat on the outside!"

And now we are going to let our readers into a few of the secrets, in search of which men of old spent their lives and their fortunes.

Here, first, is a prescription for the manufacture of artificial gold, taken from an old alchemical manuscript.

Take equal parts of powdered iron, sublimated sulphur, and crude antimony. Melt it in a crucible and keep it in red heat for eight hours. Powder it and calcine it until the sulphur is evaporated. Mix two parts of this powder with one part of calcined borax, and melt it again. Powder and dissolve it in common muriatic acid, and let it stand in a moderate heat for one month. The fluid is then to be put into a retort and distilled, and the fluid that collects in the recipient (the muriatic acid) is returned into the retort and again distilled, and this is repeated three times; the third time a red powder will be left in the retort. This powder is to be dissolved in the "menstruum philosophicum," which is made by pouring chloride of antimony into water, filtering and evaporating the fluid to a certain extent to make it stronger. The solution is to be evaporated again, and the remaining powder mixed with its own weight of corrosive sublimate of mercury. This powder is to be dissolved again in diluted muriatic acid, and distilled until a red, oily substance passes into the receiver. If you obtain this oil, you may take some newly prepared chloride of silver, saturate it gradually with the oil, and dry it. Put one part of this powder into five parts of molten lead; separate the lead again from the silver by cupellation, and you will find that one-third of the silver has been transformed into gold.

It would be cheaper and easier, in the long run, if one could find the prescription for the "Tinctura Physica," a red ethereal fluid which was capable of transmuting all inferior metals into gold, and had other wonderful virtues as well. Paracelsus had the secret of this fluid, he says, but has not revealed it. Possibly the prescription is the "treasure" which he said he had buried at the hospital of Weiden, and which is a "jewel of such a value, that neither Pope Leo nor the Emperor Carolus could buy it with all his wealth."

He has told us, however, how to make the "Electrum Magicum," out of which you may make a mirror, in which you may see the events of the past and the present; absent friends and enemies; and so forth. Take ten parts of pure gold, ten of silver, five of copper, two of tin, two of lead, one of powdered iron, and five of mercury—all pure metals. Wait until Saturn and Mercury come into conjunction, having all your appliances ready for the fortunate moment. Then melt the lead, add the mercury, and let it cool. Wait for a conjunction of Jupiter with Saturn and Mercury, then melt your compound in a crucible, and, in another crucible, the tin, and pour the two metals together at the moment of conjunction. Wait for a conjunction of the Sun with either of the planets, and then melt and add the gold. Similarly at a conjunction of the Moon with the Sun, or Saturn, or Mercury, add the silver in like manner; and at a conjunction of Venus with any of the others, add the copper. The last conjunction is with Mars, when the iron is to be added, the fluid stirred with a dry rod of witch-hazel, let it cool—and there you are!

This is how to prepare the Elixir of Life, which Paracelsus did not—with all respect to Sir Thomas Browne—hold capable of rendering the physical body immortal, but only of prolonging life. Take half a pound of pure carbonate of potash and expose it in the air until dissolved. Filter the fluid and add as many leaves of the plant melissa as it will hold. Let it stand in a well-closed glass and in a moderately warm place for twenty-four hours. Remove the leaves and throw them away; on the top of the fluid pour "absolute alcohol," to the height of one or two inches, and let it remain until the alcohol becomes intensely green. Take away the alcohol and preserve it, and go on repeating the operation until all the colouring matter is absorbed by the

alcohol from the alkaline fluid. Now distill your alcoholic fluid and evaporate until it becomes a syrup, and that is your Elixir of Life, by which "man may rejuvenate his constitution by purifying it, so that it may be able to receive without any interruption the life-giving influence of the divine spirit."

Had we space, we could also give the prescription for the Alcahest, or universal medicine, which was known to the Rosicrucians, and was supposed to cure nearly all diseases; or for the Zeneton, an amulet for protecting the wearer against the plague, sorcery, poison, and "evil astral influences," which also draws poison out of the body and absorbs it entirely.

But perhaps we have said enough to show that Paracelsus was indeed, as De Quincey owned, an "extraordinary" man—a strange mixture of knowledge and imagination; of science and superstition; of honesty and humbug; of chemistry and charlatanism; of contradictions and inconsistencies. And perhaps not the least extraordinary thing about a man who claimed to possess so many powers for the creation of wealth is that he died practically a pauper, and left little else but his published works and MSS. These, certainly, are numerous enough, amounting, according to one writer, to thirty-five works on medicine, two hundred and thirty-five on philosophy, twelve on politics, seven on mathematics, and sixty-six on necromancy.

Many of these, however, are accounted spurious, and Dr. Hueser was satisfied with the genuineness of only about seventeen altogether. Dr. Hartmann gives a list of one hundred and six works, including MSS. And yet Paracelsus's own library, at his death, consisted of a Bible, a Biblical Concordance and Commentary, and a single book on medicine!

ONLY A WEEK!

ONLY a week, since you and I
Just "kept each other company;"
Ah! sweet old phrase of every day,
Such as we use in earnest play,
Touching the heart-strings tenderly.

Now, sullen looks the stranger sky
On the slow hours that weary by;
How long since we two wooed delay!
Only a week!

Could any graceful subtlety
The Past's sweet careless magic try
To teach the Present to essay
The joy that went with you away?
That asked to be, to live, to die—
Only a week!

AMONG THE FRUIT MERCHANTS.

THERE is no such fruit market anywhere as the great London fruit market—not meaning Covent Garden, which is great also in its way, but rather that little-visible, almost underground market which lies beneath the shadow of the Monument, and which has driven the butchers from the stalls they held of old in Eastcheap. About Philpot Lane, too, rise the fine new warehouses of the fruit merchants. Pudding Lane, also, is fully charged with the materials of a national plum-pudding, and in Monument Yard, it goes without saying, that fruit of all kinds is pre-eminent. Then, in Botolph Lane fruit shades off into fish, which mingle together in inexpressible confusion—of odours, as between the fragrance of oranges and red herrings; of tongues, as in the mutual upbraidings of carters, porters, loafers, and costermongers.

Long enough about the streets leading down to the river just below London Bridge the London fruit market has been established. "Several fruit brokers had their mart near Todgers's," we read in "Martin Chuzzlewit;" and now the fruit brokers and other dealers in produce have elbowed such establishments as Todgers's out of existence. The dingy labyrinth of old houses—boarding-houses, lodging-houses, and the rest—has given place to wide streets with handsome warehouses, some finished, others rising fast from their old-world foundations; and among these elegant Palladian structures, with their columns, carvings, and shining plate-glass, the warehouses of the fruit merchants are conspicuous.

There are, it may well be supposed, many grades and distinctions among dealers in fruit, in which the recognised divisions of imported fruit are blended and mixed.

Officially, according to the Customs lists, all fruit is divided into three parts—dried fruits; green fruits; and nuts. Now the dried fruits are especially under efficient surveillance, inasmuch as there is a duty upon them of seven shillings a hundred-weight. It is not enough to encourage smuggling. No cargoes of raisins and figs are run on the dark nights of autumn under the cliffs of Beachy Head; nor is any enterprising traveller likely to try to smuggle a box of Muscatels among his personal belongings. But still, the Customs duty gives a kind of dignity

to the commodities: there is affair of bonded warehouses, dock warrants, Custom House clearance, and so on, with quotations and prices current, echoes from which may reach to far-off lands, and spread themselves among many races. The dervish under his Taffieh palm; the Spaniard among his vineyards and orange groves; the Greek, the Levantine with vines and fig trees; all these are moved with joy or sorrow as prices about Eastcheap move up or down.

Green fruits which are entirely duty free, are more from hand to mouth, and the more perishable must be disposed of at once, without reserve, to the highest bidder. But the title "green" is not altogether descriptive, as it includes fruits only conventionally green, such as oranges and lemons, tomatoes, Spanish onions, and potatoes; while grapes, apples, and pears, if green enough when they were shipped, are rapidly assuming more mellow colours under the influence of confinement. And it is in these fruits that Monument Yard is chiefly interested. As the fruit season begins, the sale-rooms of the great fruit brokers are thrown open. As steamer after steamer arrives, her more perishable cargo is quickly exposed for sale. From an early hour in the morning the long, bare rooms are crammed with bags, baskets, packages of all kinds, open to the inspection of the public. Billingsgate is still in full swing, and the coster who finds the fish market too high for him, drops into the yard to see how fruit is likely to go. Then at eleven or half-past the actual auction begins—a peripatetic auction—where the assistance is mostly of a Jewish character. Sharp and short are the bid-dings, decisive is the auctioneer's hammer. In an hour or two a whole cargo is disposed of, and for the rest of the day the base of the Monument is encumbered by tilted vans, drays, light carts, and even costermongers' barrows, engaged in loading up and carting off.

Here is the great mart for oranges, whether St. Michaels from the Azores, brought by swift steamers that have superseded the flying schooners of other days; or from the glorious Huerta of Valencia, that fertile plain hedged in by mountains, where, for more than thirty miles, stretch orchards and orange groves; or from the dusty plains of Seville, surrounding the ruins of Moorish civilisation; or from Palermo or Messina, among the vine-clad hills of Sicily. Here the vast harvest of

these sunny climes is on view and on sale, and hence it is distributed, to light up the dull streets of our chilly fog-ridden towns, with a glow of reflected sunshine.

In this general distribution of oranges and lemons, and the like, the Jew has for centuries been the chief agent. His cosmopolitan character and his familiarity with the ramifications of his race among all classes, from the highest to the lowest, are his best qualifications for the office. We have the story from Miss Edgeworth, how, when the No-Popery rioters raised a cry against the Jews, and threatened to attack and pillage their dwellings, the tide of popular feeling was met and stemmed by the orange women of London, who, drawing their supplies from Jewish hands, were the warm friends of a race who dealt with them justly and often generously. The orange woman is gone—like the apple woman of the street corner—or if not altogether extinct, only a rare specimen may be found in some favoured locality.

All this green fruit trade is extending and increasing from year to year. The vineyards of Almeria, of Valencia, and the surrounding coasts, send us countless boxes of grapes, gathered before they are ripe, which are sold all over the country by grocers as well as by fruiterers, at prices ranging from fourpence to tenpence a pound, and although the fruit has not the flavour and richness of grapes that have ripened on the vine, yet they form a useful and refreshing addition to the popular dessert. And these, in boxes, baskets, and crates, are to be found in warehouses and sale-rooms all about Eastcheap and the Monument. The more costly Hambro' grapes find their chief market at Covent Garden, as do the French pears, which are a great feature of the daily auctions there in the fruit season. Then the American apples, so handsome, round, and rosy; but often better in appearance than in flavour, these American apples, although stored hereabouts in indefinite tiers of barrels, generally take, what is termed in familiar language, a back seat.

If nuts are in question, here they may be found in panniers, baskets, and bags of every description. The nuts of Barcelona; those oily three-sided affairs from Brazil, that require a schoolboy's or perhaps a schoolgirl's robust palate to be relished, and are sometimes—after lying for months in the windows of small "tuck" shops—too rancid even for that. Walnuts too, there are from Bordeaux and Naples,

but none equal to the good English nut; with shell almonds from Syria or Barcelona. Then there is the majestic "coker," which finds a trade and market almost to itself, of which the smallest portion, perhaps, is that devoted to the supply of fruiterers and the wandering entrepreneurs of "knock-em-downs," the great bulk being scientifically split and the contents utilised in various ways, whether for oil or confectionery, while the husks are mainly devoted to the employment of the hopeless inmates of Her Majesty's gaols—in mat making and kindred manufactures—and therefor use forms a useful, handsome winter covering for garden borders, and the bulbs that are to make them gay in spring-time.

Shading gradually off from the rough and ready methods of the green fruit dealers, we find ourselves among warehouses of a more dignified type. There are counting-houses with highly-polished counters and glass screens; here are wide, well-lit floors, piled with the neatest of boxes and cases; inside we have massive cranes, and lifts, and gaping cellars, that swallow up the contents of drays and vans, and which, although always full, never seem to overflow. When fog settles upon the City in the early days of still November, then shine out the lights most cheerfully from these great dépôts of good things; then is the orderly bustle at its height; then are the wide floors the most thickly piled with their white and cheerful-looking cases; then is the throng of customers most apparent—not the tribe of Israel so much, as cleanly-shaven English buyers; then solid-looking grocers congregate, those whose shop windows will presently be adorned with all tempting combinations of fruit and festive knickknacks.

What a solid trade there is in currants about this time! and of what times before this, say,

Vieux amis de Christmas Mincepye et Plumporoge!

Why, even the etymology of the fruit seems to be a good deal fogged by antiquity. Why should currants be popularly called plums? Why should they be called currants indeed, thus giving people a notion that they are a richer, and more generous form of those red or white bunches that grow on our currant bushes at home. Precisians, indeed, of the last century may have refined upon the name. "Had I not better go out and order raisins and corinths for the wedding-cake?" asks honest Colonel Lambert in the "Virginians." And, no doubt, Thackeray would

have shown chapter and verse for the expression—which seems to have been derived from the French name for these little black grapes—"raisins de corinth." But currants were currants long before then. In a yellow, faded, commercial advice of the seventeenth century, which the writer has before him, one Jonadab Battam, a City fruit dealer of the period, offers the best new Zant currants at forty-four shillings per cwt., and currants figure plainly enough in invoices of the same period. Matters are here mixed up in a way that it would take too long to unravel, seeing that here are the things themselves just as they were packed in the Grecian Peloponnes, headed up in huge casks and trodden into a compact mass by the heavy feet of Greek peasants. These currants hail from Patras, from Vostessa, from Kalamata—all places on the famed peninsula—where they grow no bigger than peas in bunches some three inches long on their dwarf vines. For long the English market absorbed nearly the whole of the crop, as no other nation seemed to share our taste for the fruit. But of late, since the ravages of the phylloxera in the French vineyards, a demand has sprung up on the part of the makers of cheap red wines in the south of France. But the item of currants is an important one still in our Customs budget, and contributes the greater part of the half million or so of duty levied on dried fruits: the average importation being about sixty thousand tons, at a declared value of a million and a half of pounds sterling.

Next come raisins, of which Spain supplies the bulk. From Malaga come those tempting boxes adorned with filigree and gilt paper, and with coloured medallions, dark-eyed servitors and courtiers with exaggerated pork-pie hats. Why we should call these raisins Muscatels, nobody seems to know: perhaps from the Muscat grape that the Moors may have brought into Spain from their African home. But they were known to our forefathers as "raysons of the sun." And these "raysons of the sun" people credited with a kind of recuperative force. Always they formed part of the equipage of a last illness. The neat little table spread by the patient's bedside with saffron water and the dish of "raysons of the sun," with the old family Bible reserved for such solemn occasions, reminded the sufferer that he or she had done with the ordinary fare of mortal life. Sun-dried, indeed should these raisins be, and yet not

so much dried as distilled; the watery parts driven off, and all the richer qualities of the grape developed in Nature's alembic. The best of these raisins are dried upon the vine. When the bunch is ripe the stem is twisted, or partly severed, and then the fierce sun does the rest. Commoner raisins are gathered and hung up on strings in the sunshine, and, as they dry, are scalded or dipped into a lye, a process which brings the saccharine particles to the surface, when the fruit assumes its well-known slightly candied appearance. The raisins without stones, called Sultanas, are from Smyrna, which, otherwise, is more concerned with figs.

All round the Mediterranean coast the fig-tree grows and flourishes; even in England it is often found in old-fashioned gardens, in a shrubby form, trained against the wall, and Worthing boasts of fig-gardens of unknown antiquity, where the fruit matures and ripens. But the figs of the Levant bear the highest reputation, and here the greatest care and skill are employed in growing and harvesting the crop.

From figs to dates the transition is not violent, for the fig-tree and the date-palm may be found in the same landscape; but the date-palm will grow on the sandiest barren, if only there be moisture below to which its deeply-set roots can penetrate. Egypt is the favoured country of the date, and it is said that more than two millions and a half of palms are there registered as fruit-bearing trees, and, as a single tree will sometimes bear as much as four hundred-weight of dates—quoted last year at fifty shillings in London, but this year, from over-abundant supplies, not worth half—it may be seen what an important matter to the Egyptian fellah is his date harvest.

Once upon a time probably the sacred valley of the Jordan supplied us with those almonds that are indissolubly connected with raisins in popular phraseology. Nowadays the Jordan almonds, like the raisins of Muscat, come from thriving Malaga. The finest of these are among the most expensive articles in the general fruit merchant's repertory. But then, they are not eaten by the handful, and, indeed, are the hardest and most indigestible of all kernels that are fit to eat at all.

It strikes us with a feeling of wonder that all these products of such distant and varied climes should thus rendezvous within a radius of a few hundred yards of London's tall column. And our wonder would be

greater still if we could only picture in the mind's eye the fleet of ships concerned in bearing to us the mighty tribute that we draw from sunnier climes. And, if we could pile all the fruit together that comes to us in any one year: the five million bushels of oranges and lemons—are there baskets enough in the world to hold them?—the other five million bushels of green fruits; the sixty thousand tons of currants; the twenty-five thousand tons of raisins; the thousands of tons of figs and dates; surely the whole trophy would completely bury the Monument, and obscure even the mighty dome of St. Paul's.

A BRUSH WITH CHINESE PIRATES.

PIRACY on the high seas is now, fortunately, a crime long since dead among European nations. We must go back to the early period of Marryat and Cooper, if we desire to know of the atrocities and iniquities committed by the hordes of lawless ruffians who used to infest the sea at the beginning of the present century, and carry on their merciless business of butchery and plunder. Our brethren in the Celestial Empire, however, are slow to remove evils, and piracy with them seems to die hard. Reports occasionally reach this country of some European vessel being attacked in Chinese waters by the natives; but, fortunately, owing to the extreme cowardice usually displayed by the attacking party, these attempted depredations do not often lead to any serious result.

The China Sea is, principally, the happy hunting-ground of these dastardly pirates; and Nature seems to have adapted it specially for that particular purpose. The China Sea is, in many places, exceedingly shallow; strong currents sweep along its course; while numerous islands, with wooded creeks, dotted here and there, afford capital shelter and points of observation for piratical junks to lie in ambush, until some unsuspecting merchantman shall hove in sight. Vessels in traversing these seas, except during the season of the monsoons, have often to contend against dead head-winds or calms that last for days and days. During these periods, sailing ships have frequently, if in proximity to land, to cast anchor, to prevent being carried ashore by the various swift and conflicting currents, and at such times present capital opportunities for the

marauders of the seas to carry out their nefarious designs.

Although the Chinese pirate is, as a rule, a most abject coward where Europeans are concerned, he is, at least, capable of striking terror into the hearts of his countrymen; and a couple of pirate junks, mounting but a single two-pounder gun between them, have been known to blockade a port of four thousand inhabitants, and to plunder every ship that passed. In another case, a pirate gang of five hundred, who had yielded to a rush of twenty or thirty bluejackets, had previously defied a native force of one thousand five hundred troops and forty war junks. Directly, however, a small gunboat, manned by Europeans, appeared upon the scene, their career was at an end.

Chinese piracy is, at times, almost a business. A pirate merchant, in the wholesale way, will infest certain villages on the sea-board or islands. He will keep fifteen or twenty junks, with a corresponding retinue of ruffians, and when he has secured his plunder, he stores it in safety. A pirate in a small way of business, having once made a good haul, will divide the spoil, and then his followers immediately disperse, for fear of an attack from another gang. The old saying of "dog eat dog," applies with striking force to the transactions of these plunderers of the China Sea.

An old traveller in the East tells the following narrative of a brush he had with Chinese pirates, when on his way, in a native junk, from Foo-choo-foo, by the mouth of the Min River, to Chusan. The story is a fair sample of the cowardice displayed by these pests, when the slightest amount of defence is shown by the party attacked. We relate it in the traveller's own words.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, and when we were some fifty or sixty miles from the Min, the captain and pilot came hurriedly down to my cabin, and informed me that they saw a number of "jan-dous" right astern and overhauling us. I ridiculed the idea, and told them they imagined every junk they saw to be a pirate; but they still maintained that they were so, and I, therefore, considered it prudent to be prepared for the worst. I got out of my bed, ill and feverish as I was, and carefully examined my firearms, clearing the nipples of my gun and pistols, and putting on fresh caps. I also rammed down a ball upon the top of

each charge of shot in my gun, and put a pistol in side pocket, and patiently waited for the result. By the aid of a small pocket telescope, I could see, as the nearest of the five junks approached, that her deck was crowded with men. I then had no longer any doubts regarding their intentions. I knew perfectly well that, if we were taken by the pirates, I had not the slightest chance of escape, for the first thing they would do would be to knock me on the head and throw me overboard, as they would deem it dangerous to themselves were I to get away. At the same time I must confess I had little hope of being able to beat off such a number, and devoutly wished myself anywhere rather than where I was.

The scene around me was a strange one. The captain, pilot, and one or two native passengers, were taking up the boards of the cabin floor, and putting their money and other valuables out of sight amongst the ballast. The common sailors, too, had their copper cash, or 'taien,' to hide, and the whole place was in a state of bustle and confusion. When all their more valuable property was hidden, they began to make some preparations for defence. Baskets of small stones were brought up from the hold and emptied out on the most convenient parts of the deck, and were intended to be used instead of firearms when the pirates came to close quarters. This is a common mode of defence in various parts of China, and is effectual enough when the enemy has only similar weapons to bring against them; but on the coast of Fo-kien, where we now were, all the pirate junks carried guns, and, consequently, a whole deck-load of stones could be of very little use against them.

During the general bustle I missed my own servant for a short time. When he returned to me, he had made such a change in his appearance that I did not recognise him. He was literally clothed in rags, which he had borrowed from the sailors, all of whom had also put on their worst clothes. When I asked him the reason of this change in the outward man, he told me the pirates only made those prisoners who had money, and were likely to pay handsomely for their ransom, and that they would not think it worth their while to lay hold of a man in rags.

I was surrounded by several of the crew, who might well be called "Job's comforters," some suggesting one thing and some another, and many proposed that we

should bring the junk round, and run back to the Min. The nearest pirate was now within two hundred or three hundred yards of us, and, putting her helm down, gave us a broadside from her guns. All was now dismay and consternation on board our junk, as every man ran below except two, who were at the helm. I expected every moment that these also would leave their post, and then we should have been an easy prey to the pirates.

"My gun is nearer you than those of the jan-dous," said I to the two men; "and if you move from the helm, depend upon it I will shoot you." The poor fellows looked very uncomfortable, but, I suppose, thought they had better stand the fire of the pirates than mine, and kept at their post. Large boards, heaps of old clothes, masts, and things of that sort which were at hand, were thrown up to protect us from the shot, and as we had every stitch of sail set, and a fair wind, we were going through the water at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour. The shot from the pirates fell considerably short of us, and I was therefore enabled to form an opinion of the range and power of their guns, which was of some use to me.

Assistance from our cowardly crew was quite out of the question, for there was not a man amongst them brave enough to use the stones which had been brought on deck, and which, perhaps, might have been of some little use when the pirates came nearer. The fair wind and all the press of sail we had crowded on the junk proved of no use; for our pursuers, who had much faster sailing vessels, were gaining rapidly upon us. Again the nearest pirate fired upon us. The shot this time fell under our stern. I still remained quiet, as I had determined not to fire a single shot until I was quite certain my gun would take effect. The third shot which followed this came whizzing over our heads and through the sails, without, however, wounding either the men at the wheel or myself.

The pirates now seemed quite sure of their prize, and came down upon us, hooting and yelling like demons, at the same time loading their guns, and evidently determined not to spare their shot. This was a moment of intense anxiety. The plan which I had formed from the first was now about to be put to the proof; and if the pirates were not the cowards which I believed them to be, nothing could save us from falling into their hands. Their fearful yells seem to be ringing in my ears

even now, after this lapse of time, and when I am on the other side of the globe.

The nearest junk was now within thirty yards of ours; their guns were now loaded, and I knew that the next discharge would completely rake our decks. "Now," said I to our helmsmen, "keep your eyes fixed on me, and the moment you see me fall flat on the deck you must do the same, or you will be shot." I knew that the pirate who was now on our stern could not bring his guns to bear upon us without putting his helm down, and bringing his gangway at right angles with our stern, as his guns were fired from the gangway. I therefore kept a sharp eye upon his helmsman, and the moment I saw him putting the helm down I ordered our steersmen to fall flat upon their faces behind some wood, and at the same time did so myself. We had scarcely done so when bang, bang, went their guns, and the shot came whizzing close over us, splintering the wood about us in all directions. Fortunately none of us were struck. "Now, M——, now they are quite close enough," cried out my companions, who did not wish to have another broadside like the last. I, being of the same opinion, raised myself above the high stern of our junk, and while the pirates were not more than twenty yards from us, hooting and yelling, I raked their decks, fore and aft, with shot and ball from my double-barrelled gun.

Had a thunderbolt fallen amongst them they could not have been much more surprised; doubtless many were wounded and probably some killed.

At all events, the whole of the crew, not fewer than forty or fifty men, who a moment before crowded the deck, disappeared in a marvellous manner. Another was now bearing down upon us as boldly as his companion had done, and commenced firing in the same manner. Having been so successful with the first, I determined to follow the same plan with this one, and to pay no attention to his firing until he should come to close quarters. The plot now began to thicken, for the first junk had gathered way again and was following in our wake, although keeping at a respectful distance, and three others, although still further distant, were making for the scene of action as fast as they could. In the meantime, the second was almost alongside, and continued raking our decks in a steady manner with their guns. Watching their helm as before, we sheltered ourselves as well as we could; at the same

time, my two fellows, who were steering, kept begging and praying that I would fire into our pursuers as soon as possible, or we should be all killed. As soon as they came within twenty or thirty yards of us, I gave them the contents of both barrels, raking their decks as before. This time the helmsman fell, and doubtless several others were wounded. In a minute or two, I could see nothing but boards and shields which were held up by the pirates to protect themselves from my firing; their junk went up into the wind for want of a helmsman, and was soon left some distance behind us.

The foregoing does certainly not say much for Chinese native courage, either by the attacking or defending party. To cast the burden and peril of defence entirely upon one man, while his comrades slink below out of harm's way, seems strange to Western ideas of honour and courage. It is, however, truly typical of this extraordinary race. Actual fighting and real danger they shun as one would the plague, and it is only when the marauders of the sea can overwhelm their opponents simply by sheer force of numbers, that they are ever successful in their evil designs. If it were arranged for a few smart European gunboats to be constantly plying up and down the China Sea, and their commanders were given powers to deal summarily with all rascals caught in acts of piracy, there is but little doubt that the pirates of Chinese waters would soon be extirpated.

"IF YOU WANT A THING DONE YOU MUST DO IT YOURSELF."

A CAREFUL study of maxims, new and old, has revealed to me the fact that the worthiness of a maxim of any sort of reverence depends almost entirely upon the fashion in which it is expressed. At an early period of my investigations I noticed that the more stately the diction of the maxim, the more fallacious the lesson it professed to convey. A sonorous combination of substantives and adjectives of Latin origin might throw a gilded splendour over some miserable pinchbeck sentiment, but a slight examination would inevitably reveal the baser metal. Maxims of this sort are, almost without exception, worthless. A word or two of homely Anglo-Saxon thrown in generally increases their value, and

sometimes, when one meets with forcible, though not very elegant sentences, like the one at the head of this paper, or like another well-known one, "Money makes the mare to go," one is justified in saying that they are by no means the utterances of un wisdom.

A long life's experience of my fellow men, and of domestic servants in particular, has taught me that any man, trying to discredit entirely the maxim with which I now propose to deal, would have all his work cut out for him. Just as one might expect, from the homely form in which it is expressed, it contains a good large grain of truth; but it is by no means wholly and entirely true. It is indeed a maxim which may safely be quoted with regard to an immense majority of the human race—those who are weak; those who, though strong, are impotent through circumstances; and those good easy souls who cannot find their happiness in far-sighted dodgings and in the rapture of the strife. All these, from one cause or another, bear their own burthens, some willingly and impatiently, but most of them with free consent, feeling that it is less trouble to hoist them on their own shoulders and stagger along beneath their weight, than to set about compelling some one else to bear them for them.

All these are the world's slaves, and for them this maxim must always be a comforting commonplace to mutter, whenever they find themselves the victims in some dereliction of duty on the part of those who are bound to serve them. Some men there are who, when they find, on a fresh March morning, their shaving water lukewarm, or hardly that, will set to work and boil it up in a spirit lamp, rather than make a fuss and put the housemaid into the sulks for the rest of the day; and, if the spirit fail, they will even begin operations with the tepid fluid, and appear at breakfast gashed and horrible to look upon. With such a man as this, as is the beginning of the day, so will be its course and its ending. His wife has forgotten to replace that all-important button, so he contrives an unsatisfactory and unlovely arrangement with a bit of twine, and goes his way hitching and shifting the unruly garment all day long. Experience has taught him that the morning egg, if boiled in the kitchen, will certainly come up cold, and probably in a condition either of stone or slush, so a small saucepan has been permanently added to the breakfast equipage. Many years

ago, when he first set up housekeeping, he tried to establish the principle that it was somebody's business to brush his hat every morning and place it ready on the hall table for him to catch up when he was ready to intercept the passing omnibus; but, as years rolled by, and he found that, six mornings out of seven, he would be forced to choose between going up to the office with hat unbrushed and losing the half-past nine omnibus, he found it wise to waive principle, and to deduct a minute from his breakfast time in order to set right the nap of his hat himself. At the office again it was just the same. He suffers from a tendency to catch cold, and every fresh office boy, on the threshold of his career, is taught that it is a part of his duty on wet mornings to search in a cupboard for a pair of dry shoes, and to place them conveniently beside his principal's desk; but with the lapse of a very few weeks the office boy's attentions are relaxed. The charms of the work of fiction he happens to be reading are powerful enough to make him oblivious to the face of the heavens, and he considers not whether it be wet or dry. In any case the dry shoes are still in the cupboard, when the British merchant enters with sodden feet and dripping umbrella. On the first half-dozen occasions he will storm and rail, and summon the boy from the outer office perhaps; but after a little he will accept his fate and hunt for the shoes himself, muttering as he ties the strings—ah, what a business that is, the tying of a shoe-string, when the measure of the girdle has outstripped that of the chest!—"if you want a thing done you must do it yourself."

This stout Briton, whose case we have been considering, is one of the world's slaves. He may be a householder, a rate-payer, a man possibly on the high road to worldly fortune; a man even who may one day be Lord Mayor; but all these qualifications will not make a free man of him, if he be not endowed with those peculiar gifts which go to the making of a King of men. Of what mental and moral qualities these gifts are the fruit I have never been able exactly to determine; but one fact concerning them I have definitely established, viz.—that they are by no means accidents inseparably connected with exalted worldly state. They are the monopoly of no one grade of one social hierarchy. Men to whom our maxim is an unmeaning platitude may be Dukes and they may be rag-men; but, wherever their lives may be cast, they will quickly make their presence

felt in their own immediate circle. To them the idea of doing anything for themselves, while there is anyone else to do it instead, is as revolting as cold water to an Esquimaux, or rent-paying to an Irish Nationalist. Without proclaiming their policy to the world, without saying or doing anything to show their purpose, they slip quietly into the best places; they walk off with the choicest prizes, and they compel the attention and services of anyone who may happen to cross their path. I can call to mind a dozen men who wear this crown; and the more I think about this emblem of kingship, the more I am inclined to believe that it must be one of Fortune's chance-bestowed gifts, and not the offspring of self-cultivation—men who conquer the world and bind their fellows to their chariot-wheels by the force of the hidden charm which radiates from their presence. Charm do I call it? I suppose it must be a charm, because even I have sometimes to own its power; but many of the fellows I am dealing with, I protest, are anything but charming—in fact, they are, for the most part, neither wise, nor witty, nor amiable, nor good to look at. The possession of their one virtue has rendered all these minor graces superfluous. They are, therefore, dispensed with, and left to soften the manners, and discipline the minds, of those whose mission it is to stand and serve.

I can call to mind a dozen men at least of different sorts and conditions, who are the fortunate possessors of this gift. Its outward manifestations are so utterly different in different cases that it is hard work sometimes to identify them.

The first example that occurs to me is that of William Bladger, who used to live in the mews just round the corner. The day after I took up my abode in my present house I found William's card in my letter-box. Under the subfnak impression of a human thumb I read that his line in general was "odd jobs." He was, however, a specialist in window cleaning; in taking up, beating, and relaying carpets; and in cleaning boots and shoes, and knives and forks, by the week or quarter. I took no heed of William's trade notice, for my wife and I, when we set up house-keeping, had engaged a full staff of servants, every member of which was informed, on accepting office, that there was to be no extra help in the way of "odd jobs" or charwomen; but William Bladger was not to be beaten by any conspiracy of silence. After about a month he favoured me with

a call, and I, not recognising his name, told Henry, our page boy, to show him up into the library. "I took the libbity to look round, sir. William Bladger, sir. Thinkin' as how you might have mislaid my card, sir. Cards, sir, you know, do get mislaid sometimes; and if there should be any odd jobs, sir—carpet beatin', window——"

"Oh, I saw your card," I replied, "but I don't want you. Our household is arranged on such a scale that we require no extra help of any sort."

I fancied I detected a twinkle in the corner of William's eye as he answered—a twinkle which seemed to say that he had often listened to the like before.

"Werry good, sir. Quite so, sir. But as I was a-sayin', supposin' as if at any time you should want a man for such like as window-cleanin'——"

"I dare say I shall know where to find you," I replied; "but, as I told you before, I don't want a man for odd jobs."

"I understand you, sir, puffickly; but, you see, sir, your young man is a little short, and your winders is high, and if at any time anything went wrong with the curtains or that like, or when the carpets want takin' up and beatin' and relayin', why, you have only to send round the corner—William Bladger, number four. Good morning, sir."

I had an uncomfortable feeling, when William Bladger left my presence, that I had not seen the last of him. He was a broad-bodied, broad-faced, good-tempered-looking man with a merry eye; but, in looking at him I was conscious of something else behind his good-nature. I was conscious of a hidden power about the man, and felt that it depended upon his own views and feelings how long he should honour my sanctum with his presence. I could not imagine myself ordering him to quit the room. However, Bladger, if he had a giant's strength, knew that it was tyrannous to use it like a giant, for he left me in peace after his last remark.

In less than a fortnight after this visit two of the curtain-hooks in the drawing-room did get adrift, as Bladger hinted they probably would, and, upon Henry's suggestion, Bladger was called in after every one had had a trial to reach them. He arrived smiling, as was his wont, and at once ordered Mary and the cook to cover the drawing-room table with sheets and rugs, and sent Henry downstairs to fetch the steps. His staff then moved the table

into a proper position, adjusted the steps upon it; Henry, under his directions, mounted the steps and put the hooks right, and then Bladger gave his orders for the furniture to be restored to its usual state. He smiled about the house, and detained me, for half-an-hour or so, in conversation as to the advisability—he treated it as an absolute necessity—of having all the carpets taken up at once and beaten and relaid.

"They're going to rack and ruin, sir, that's what's the matter with them," he said, shaking his head professionally, and looking as gloomy as was possible in a person of his cheerful habit. I felt terribly depressed as I listened, for the remembrance of my bill for carpets was yet green—a green wound, in fact—but I was a little relieved when Bladger told me they would be as good as new after he had dealt with them. All this time, however, I was wasting the precious hours. My forefinger and thumb wandered towards my waistcoat-pocket, and William took the hint. "Let's see, sir; 'tis over the hour since I come in; two hours say, at tenpence, one-and-eight. Thanky, sir. You've only to let your young man know when you want me. I'm on the spot, as you may say, sir; quite handy like; just round the corner."

William, then, was one of the people who had the gift of getting his burthen carried for him; one of those for whom our maxim had little meaning. He smiled and gave his directions at the rate of tenpence per hour, and managed to get all the work done by some one else.

In quite another walk of life, there is my friend Leontius, who passes amongst those who know him only superficially, as one of the hardest-worked men in England; but I, who am acquainted both with his rule and practice of life, can tell quite another story. Often I have heard him declare, as we have been sitting in his comfortable sanctum, over our cigarettes: "the cheapest thing I can buy is labour; the most delightful thing in the world to me is leisure; so I naturally spend something extra in labour in order to increase my leisure."

I remembered that I had once made a similar experiment; that is, I had spent my money trying to get my work done for me, but had to do it myself after all; for I was not blessed with the mysterious power. Leontius, however, was endowed with it in a far greater degree even than William Bladger. He was the head-master of a large public school, with a Council on one side to be alternately

humoured and bullied; and, on the other, the three discordant groups of masters, boys, and parents to be kept in order. To have administered such an institution in purely bureaucratic method would have taxed the powers of the strongest. My friend was fully strong enough to have done it; but he was far too good an economist to waste his powers in such fashion. "No," he would moralise between the puffs of his cigarette, "I'm not going to be taken in by that silly old proverb about the necessity of doing everything you want to have done, yourself. With a little system, I can assure you, it is much easier to get other people to do the work for you."

I wondered for a time how it was that Leontius managed to get his under-masters to do his form work for him; the secretary to undertake his private correspondence; and a certain friend of his to correct the proof sheets and see through the press the literary work which has immortalised his name; but I soon learnt that it was only done by a careful study of men and their little weaknesses. Mr. Pickrell, the head mathematical master, as is often the case with men with a speciality, had a firm conviction that his chief strength lay in classics; and Leontius, having made himself master of this fact, would constantly be going to Mr. Pickrell for his opinion as to the sense of certain passages in the "Knights" of Aristophanes, the play he was then reading with the sixth. Then Mr. Pickrell was asked to take the lecture for a week, and before the week was over the head-master had confided to Mr. Rollit, the second mathematician, in strict confidence, that the work in some of Mr. Pickrell's forms was not quite what it ought to be, and persuaded Mr. Rollit that it would be a great advantage to all concerned if he would take a little extra work for the remainder of the term. So Mr. Pickrell's hands were left at liberty for a spell of classical work, and he went complacently into the sixth form room and gave out the philological light, which he had just absorbed from one of Mr. Bohn's useful publications, to the classmen in embryo, who had many of them also come fresh from the same fount of learning—the one thorn in his cushion being the regret that Fate had willed he should spend his life in talking about co-efficients, and spaces, and dimensions, instead of mouthing out the woes of Oedipus and *Æneas*. Mr. Rollit took two of Pickrell's forms, the trouble of the extra work being amply

stoned for by the fierce delight of tearing to pieces and showing up with withering comment to the head-master, when he came round to review, the work of his so-called superior. By similar manoeuvres, Leontius shunted his remaining work upon some others of the sub-masters, but he always managed to do it in a way which made them willing slaves. So everybody was pleased, Leontius most of all, perhaps, as he sat in his cosy study puffing the fragrant cigarette, cutting the leaves of a new magazine, and listening to the faint sound of Mr. Pickrell's voice coming through the open windows of the form room, as he gave out some favourite reading of his own with peculiar emphasis.

Perhaps in considering our maxim, I ought to have kept in sight the principle, "placeauxdames"; for the fair sex assuredly are no mean adepts in the art of transferring burthens. Of course, I am not alluding to the thousand and one duties which chivalry requires rough men to undertake for the consolars of their lives. There are however, certain things which, not even in America, a woman has any right to ask a man to do for her on the weaker sex argument; such a burthen, for instance as was once shifted on to my own shoulders by Mrs. Blinks, the wife of the Reverend Adolphus Blinks, late a missionary in the Southern seas. These worthy people were fellow passengers of mine on board a steamer homeward-bound from Australia. Blinks was a good, earnest, estimable little man, and I was always interested to listen to his story of his hard life and ungrateful toil in the field of his choice. I found much to admire and much to pity; but I pitied him most of all in having to drag about the world such a wife as Mrs. B. She was a little, lean, wizened, sharp-nosed woman, without the faintest feminine charm; but a charm of another sort she possessed, to wit, the faculty of making her unfortunate husband—who, I suppose, was in duty bound—and all the other men on the ship do her bidding.

Our steamer arrived at Colombo on a Saturday, and did not sail till Sunday afternoon; so there was time enough, one would have thought, for anyone to buy a boat-load of the rubbish that is displayed for the admiration of the traveller, and his ultimate and sure spoliation. Other people chaffered and bought gaily enough all the morning; but Mrs. Blinks sat languidly rocking herself in a chair under the hotel verandah. At last,

just as the more anxious people were making a move to go on board, Mr. Blinks approached his wife and whispered something nervously in her ear. She turned at him like a snappish dog. "You did not get it yesterday, and of course you can't get it to-day; so the poor darling will be disappointed. I might have known you would make a muddle of it;" and poor Blinks stole away crestfallen to get the traps ready to go on board.

Almost immediately he was out of sight Mrs. Blinks rose and came towards me. I felt at once that I was going to be victimised. I made a vain attempt to stiffen my back for a refusal, but I was soon powerless, and forced to do her bidding; just as the miserable snakes were obliged to obey the fearful screeching which the black fellow was making on his pipes in the court outside.

"Oh, Mr. X.," she began, "I wonder whether you will do me a kindness. We promised to take back to the ship a model of a catamaran for our little Reginald; and somehow it has been forgotten, and we are so dreadfully pressed for time. Would you mind just stepping round into the bazaar and buying one for me? They are only a shilling; at least, that is what Mrs. MacScrew gave for hers, and I will be here when you come back with it."

Of course I went, weak wretch that I was. The bazaar was half-a-mile away, Mrs. B.'s idea of "just round the corner." When I arrived there, half melted, I found that catamarans had gone up in the market immensely since Mrs. MacScrew had made her purchase. None were to be had for less than two rupees. I bartered and haggled till I felt I was running a risk of letting the steamer go off without me, and even then I had to give a rupee and a-half for a rickety, loosely-tied abomination, which it took two hands to carry. When I returned to the hotel I found that everybody for the ship had gone. Mrs. Blinks was not the sort of woman to risk being left behind, and she had prudently omitted to give me the shilling till the catamaran should be duly delivered. I huddled my traps together, and got a gharry (double fare) to take me to the landing stage; then I hailed a boat (double fare again) to row me to the steamer, and finally effected a lodgement on deck just as the steam whistle was giving its last hoarse and angry scream of warning. Mrs. Blinks met me on deck, and muttered an apology for having gone off without

relieving me of the catamaran; but she couldn't think what I had been doing all that time. "And you don't mean to say you gave a shilling for this thing! Why, it's not half so good as Mrs. MacScrew's, and broken into the bargain," she went on. Some of the gear had come adrift in the hurried transit, I must admit. I did not wait to listen to her complaints, or for my shilling either, as I felt my temper rising to the mark of the thermometer in the engine-room. I moved off, and detailed my adventures to a group of passengers assembled in the smoking-room, and then I learned that almost every one present had been let in in like fashion.

"And don't ye know," said Mr. Alexander M'Arthur, a Scotch squatter from New South Wales, "don't ye know what for the meeneest's wife wadna just buy the trumpery hersel'! She didna like to break the Sawbath; but she had deil a bit of a scruple in asking other folks to do it. She wanted me to buy a sapphire ring for her, like one Mrs. Captain Jameson had just bought for seven-and-six, but I said I couldna do it, as it was agin my preenciples."

I never had an opportunity of ascertaining from the fountain-head whether there was any truth or not in Mr. M'Arthur's hypothesis. The monsoon was in full blast between Colombo and Aden, and miserable as existence was all the way to Suez, it had one compensation. Mrs. Blinks was too ill to come on deck. I never said farewell to her when I left the ship at Suez, and I never was repaid that shilling.

But the art of Mrs. Blinks was not fine art. She did not know how to discredit our maxim with the skill and delicacy of Mrs. Sydney, also a clergyman's wife, and one of my best friends. This lady transfers her burthen to your shoulders with a grace which robs it of all its weight, though it be a very Pelion to the view. Whenever I pay a visit to that pleasant West-Country Vicarage—may there be many visits yet in store for me!—I find that the Sunday School marks are about six months in arrear, and the household accounts in a state of chaotic entanglement. In a general way I hate addition sums, and I keep my own accounts so badly that I doubt whether there lives an actuary in the City of London who could make head or tail of them; but I quite enjoy myself as I am determining the relative merits, as shown by marks, of

Sarah Simpson and Elizabeth Perkins, and producing a balance-sheet, more or less exact, of the domestic expenditure. My wife, in the meantime, is equally cheerful as she sits at the other side of the room putting the final touch to a pile of antimacassars and juvenile frocks, which, as Mrs. Sydney affirms, never "could get themselves finished." My observation teaches me that we are not unduly favoured. Most of her friends within reach have their appointed tasks, and all go about them with smiling faces. There is little chance that she will ever read these lines, so I will venture to remark that she, like another illustrious personage, is always ready to find work for idle hands to do.

There is no need to multiply instances further. Most men, I fancy, could command divers examples, from among their own acquaintance, of people gifted with the faculty of proving to the world that the maxim we have been considering is as unworthy of credit, as far as they themselves are concerned, as the weather-dictions in the daily press. Such a gift is by no means an every-day one, and it is, perhaps, doubtful whether it carries everywhere a blessing with it.

To some natures it is as the ivy is to the oak. It takes fast hold on them, and draws away, into trivial and unproductive growth, the sap and strength which ought to go to the nourishment of their life's worth, something real and tangible, solid and lasting as steel. These weaker brethren are apt to spend more time and trouble in scheming how to get their work done for them, than it would cost them to do it themselves. I cannot say whether this was the case with Mrs. Blinks: but had she gone about her own business, and let the rest of mankind do the same, she would certainly have been less odious than she was, and thus have been a gainer. Leontius is a successful man, and such a one it is perilous to criticise; nor perhaps is there much need. No small portion of his leisure is spent in watching, and stoking, and oiling that very complicated machine which it is his duty to drive. His boys get plenty of scholarships, and is not that the supreme test of head-mastership?

And, in conclusion, to glance once more at Mrs. Sydney. I cannot think that even she has erred in following her particular "metier," for I would not on any account have her in the least degree different from what she is.

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"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHO ART THOU THAT JUDGEST?"

A HORRIBLE doubt was gnawing and tugging at the strings of Adrian Lyle's uneasy conscience. As a rule, when he doubted anyone or anything, he went straight to the point and solved the matter by direct investigation. Yet now, for the first time in his life, he hesitated. He would not put the question he wished, because he feared the answer.

"She is such a child," he would say to himself again and again; "why, a baby could deceive her, and what does she know of forms and ceremonies? Only I wish—I wish I dared ask how and where she first met Kenyon! I could master her by a word or look. I should hear the whole innocent story from her own innocent lips; but I have grown a coward, I think, for I dare not. Better the evil one suspects than the evil one knows. Now by what odd chance was she thrown across my path? Just that my restless, suspicious mind should invent all sorts of theories and histories about her. I might not have been so suspicious had it not been for that servant. He is a rascal if ever there was one. . . . I wonder if Neale Kenyon suspects that the fellow writes to his uncle, Sir Roy. It is an odd affair altogether. Four days—four days! I wish with all my heart I had never heard that expression from Bari. Four days! and she is so innocent and unsuspecting. But there must be a mistake. It was a hurried marriage, no doubt; but still it is a marriage.

Why, the greatest villain on earth would not have the heart to deceive that child; and Kenyon is a gentleman, though somewhat weak and yielding of nature; the sort of man to shuffle with temptation, not to resist it."

Then he threw away the end of his cigar, and walked away from the terrace where he had been watching the gondolas.

"I do not think this place agrees with me," he said to himself. "I am getting hipped, melancholy, out of sorts. I shall go on to Rome."

As he disappeared up the marble staircase, the gondola containing Kenyon and Gretchen came up to the landing-place.

The girl put her hand to her eyes as if to shield them from the dazzling light. She was still in a half dream; too happy and too engrossed even to note the absence of that grave and courteous cavalier who, of late, had been always at hand to welcome or speed her, remove her wraps, or render her any of those little services or attentions which come so naturally from some men to some women.

But Adrian Lyle, as he saw her, turned and met her in the vestibule.

"Have you enjoyed it?" he said; and there was ill-repressed curiosity in his voice and eyes.

"Oh, more than I can say," the girl answered eagerly. "But do you know, Mr. Lyle, when we had left the crowd and got away from the Grand Canal altogether, we heard the most exquisite singing you can imagine. I have heard nothing like it in the churches or anywhere. I wish so much I knew who it was! I shall never forget the voice as long as I live."

"You will doubtless hear many better in course of time," Adrian Lyle answered carelessly. "Italy abounds in beautiful voices."

"I think," she said solemnly, "there could be no other like that in the world."

They moved up the staircase together. Bari had detained Kenyon a moment.

"Pardon, Monsieur," he said in a low voice as he took up the wraps and cushions, "but some visitors have arrived at the hotel this evening, of whom I have heard Sir Roy speak. Their name is Graham."

Kenyon started as if he had been shot.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, "what a horrible nuisance! Of course, it would never do to meet them. Get everything ready to start to-morrow morning, Bari. We will go on to Roma."

"Yes, Monsieur, and you will explain to—Madame?"

"Of course, of course; and do, like a good fellow, get us off without meeting those people. It would never do—never!"

"Monsieur may trust to me. Breakfast shall be served in Monsieur's apartment, and the gondola will be in waiting directly afterwards. The train starts at nine in the morning."

"The earlier the better," said Kenyon. "Bring me up some soda and brandy to my room, Bari, and don't mention my name in the hearing of these people, if you value your place."

"Monsieur shall be obeyed."

There was the usual bustle and confusion going on at the railway station. Porters and commissionnaires were rushing about; hotel dignitaries were conducting departing visitors to their carriages, and doing, or superintending, all ticket-taking, luggage-labelling, and other arrangements on their behalf.

Gretchen and Kenyon were comfortably settled in their carriage. The former was gazing out of the window at the hurrying crowd, and laughing at the general confusion. Suddenly she gave a little cry and leant forwards.

"Mr. Lyle—oh, Mr. Lyle, are you going too? Do come in here. There is plenty of room!"

She had opened the carriage door in an instant, and Kenyon, leaning forward, saw the tall, familiar figure standing on the platform.

"My dear fellow, do come in," he cried. "Who would have thought of seeing you? I left a note at the hotel telling you we were off, and excusing ourselves for not taking formal leave."

Adrian Lyle was beside them now, his foot on the high step, his face a little paler

and graver than its wont, looking back at Gretchen's lovely, excited eyes. A passing official bade him hurry—the train was just off. In another second he had swung himself up and into the carriage, and was tossing his portmanteau and rugs in various directions.

"It is odd, meeting you like this," he said, with a little hard laugh. "I only made up my mind to quit Venice last night, and I, too, left a note of farewell for you."

"And why are you leaving?" asked Gretchen eagerly. "Neale keeps saying it doesn't agree with him—it is damp and chilly, and that he will bring me back a few weeks later, when the weather is warm. I was so sorry to come away. And did you think it did not agree with you, Mr. Lyle?"

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle slowly, and not meeting the frank, sweet eyes. "I began to find it—did not—agree with me."

"Well, I hope you are going to Rome also," said Gretchen gaily, "for I am sure you are better than any guide-book, and you can explain all about the wonders of the Eternal City to me. I am so dreadfully ignorant. I thought I should find it just as I learnt in the history; but Neale laughs and says the Palatine is a ruin; and so is the Colosseum; and the Forum is only a few broken arches; and Rome is all dust and dirt, except where the new English quarter has sprung up. Octavia would not know it were she to come back to it, and it would break great Cæsar's heart. Is that true?"

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle, "it is quite true. Time does not stand still, you know, and Rome is the mother of the world. But I have yet to see her as she is. I can only tell you travellers' tales about her. The Rome of your history and your fancy is separated by two thousand years of war, and siege, and famine, and pestilence, from the Rome you will see."

"Now we are off," said Kenyon, as the train glided out of the great damp station, and shot out over the gleaming water, all rosy and golden with the morning light.

Gretchen looked longingly back at the city.

"Good-bye, Venice," she murmured. "Beautiful, wonderful Venice! I wonder if I shall ever see you again!"

"Of course you will, child," said Kenyon, a little pettishly. "I have told you we shall come back. Why, we haven't seen

half of it yet. There is the Lido, and the Murano, and the Armenian Convent—the place where Byron stayed, you know—and—and—oh, heaps of places!”

“What made you leave so suddenly?” asked Adrian Lyle, fixing his calm, grey eyes on the young man’s face.

Kenyon looked slightly confused. “Well, as Gretchen says, it was so confoundedly damp and chilly. It is too early in the year for Venice. Rome will be just right.”

“Are you going straight through, or do you rest at Florence?”

“We shall stay there to-night if we are tired,” said Kenyon. “I know it very well. I don’t care to go over the old ground again. With the exception of the Duomo and the two galleries, one might as well be in an English town now—English dresses, English horses, English carriages, English faces. That’s what Florence is. The Cascine is a regular Hyde Park; so is Lung’ Arno, with its strings of carriages, and riders, and promenaders. The only places I liked about Florence were Tivoli and Vallombrosa, and they are both a long way out of it.”

“Well, we will not stop there,” said Gretchen gaily. “I know nothing of it at all, it was not in my history. I am content to go on to Roma. Are you, Mr. Lyle?”

She included him so innocently and naturally as their companion, that he felt it would have been almost churlish to refuse her. He shook off his gravity with an effort. He declared himself perfectly content to abide by their plans, and wondered with a little ironical wonder, why Fate had so chosen to overthrow his own.

Having once thrown off his gravity, he seemed his usual natural self. His former ease of manner returned—only he rarely addressed himself to Gretchen, though he listened to her lightest words with the most courteous attention. His feelings were well under control, and no one looking at him, or listening to him, would have suspected what a dissatisfied, irritated spirit was wrestling within him for the mastery: was filling his mind once more with confusion of doubt, and forcing the simplest word or most innocent expression into one dark channel of disbelief.

“There is something wrong,” that tormenting voice told him. “There is something wrong—try as you may to doubt.”

“There is nothing wrong,” his masterful nature would indignantly reply. “There can be nothing wrong. I won’t believe it.”

And Gretchen’s guileless eyes would look at him, and her sweet lips smile; and that hateful, cruel doubt would be crushed fiercely, remorsefully down, for the look smote him as might the look in a child’s eyes, who frankly gives trust and knows not that betrayal is at hand. Besides—as he told himself again and again—there was no doubt but that the two were passionately in love with each other, and Kenyon—if he was a little weak and easy-going—was certainly not vicious. To be irresolute and yielding was very different from being downright wicked. The young man had good points—very good points. He was, to all appearances, rich, free, and independent. Why, then, should that first trivial suspicion which a chance word had fired, persistently charge itself with added doubts and increasing uneasiness?

“My dear fellow!” broke in Kenyon’s voice at this juncture, “are you composing a sermon, that you look so grave? I have spoken to you three times, and you have not answered me once.”

“I—I beg your pardon,” stammered Adrian Lyle. “I had lost myself in a maze of fancies for a moment. I really did not know you were speaking to me.”

“What were the fancies?” asked Gretchen, turning to him. “Tell me; I should so like to hear them.”

He looked at her, and a faint tinge of colour came into his pale, grave face.

“I was only thinking,” he said gently, “how few of us—if any—have really strength to master a great temptation.”

“Temptation, it seems to me, is nothing but a combination of circumstances which we have never sought to bring about, and certainly can’t avoid,” said Kenyon gloomily. “There are forces too strong for a man. He yields simply because he can’t help it, and then he is accused of not resisting what he feels is wrong.”

“There are forces that some call too strong for them to resist,” said Adrian Lyle quietly. “I have thought—it may be I am wrong—but I have thought that it was simply because they never made the effort.”

“They may make the effort and Fate will overthrow it,” said Kenyon.

“Ah,” said Adrian Lyle with that odd, puzzling smile that sometimes lighted up his face. “I forgot—Fate!”

For he remembered now why he had resolved to leave Venice, and how the resolution had been as useless as the effort to execute it.

He remembered, and he said to himself, "Who art thou who judgest another? Take heed that thou thyself may not fall!"

CHAPTER V.

TWO SIDES TO A QUESTION.

KENYON had said that night, "we will stay at Florence on our way back," and to Gretchen his lightest wish was law. The next morning, therefore, they were once more speeding along towards Rome, and again was Adrian Lyle their companion.

Kenyon complained somewhat of his eyes, and Gretchen had insisted upon bandaging them from the light, and the young fellow was lying lazily back on the seat amidst rugs and cushions, and telling Gretchen that he trusted to her for a full and particular description of the scenery as they sped along.

She was in the gayest of spirits. The previous day had been damp and rainy; but now, as they left Florence, the sun was shining brilliantly, and the cool, rich air seemed to make the girl's pulses throb, and her whole frame glow, and bring such light and glory to her face as made her indeed a "joy to look at."

"I believe Florence is beautiful, after all," she said, straining her eyes to catch sight of the yellow water, and the white villas and villages that are scattered among the shadows of the mountains as thick as summer lilies.

"Say rather its environs," murmured Kenyon lazily; "'tis a case of the enchantment of distance, my child."

"I think you are somewhat disposed to rob the city of her just dues," interposed Adrian Lyle. "If you could see her now you would be inclined to change your opinion——"

"That the Arno is yellow and muddy, instead of silvery clear; that the streets are, to say the least of it, malodorous; that it has rained for a fortnight with a steady downright persistence that would put England to shame; that the most enthusiastic of travellers' tales are responsible for many erroneous impressions; that 'Firenze la bella' is a very Anglicised modern edition of

Where, white and wide,
Washed by the morning's water-gold,
Florence lay on the mountain side."

"Oh, hush—heretic!" laughed Adrian Lyle. "We will not have any of your modern cynicisms to-day. It is a pity you

cannot see the 'morning's water-gold' for yourself. But at least you can feel the air. Is it not delicious?"

"And the hills are like silver with the olives," cried Gretchen rapturously; "and the Arno looks like molten gold; and the plains are so fresh and green that it makes one thankful for the rain you abuse. Is he not ungrateful, Mr. Lyle?"

"Perhaps he does it for a purpose," smiled her companion. "To draw out your own enthusiasm, Mrs. Kenyon."

For a moment Gretchen looked at him as if bewildered; then grew rosy red.

"I—I beg your pardon," she said, laughing; "but it did seem to me so funny to be called—that. I forgot for a moment that I had a new name; it seems scarcely possible that a fortnight ago I was—only Gretchen."

A sudden cloud came over the brightness of her face. Kenyon moved uneasily on his seat.

"My dear, things are changed since then, remember."

"You were sorry, no doubt, to leave your parents?" said Adrian Lyle gently.

"She had none to leave," interposed Kenyon with sudden sharpness. "My wife is an orphan. So much the better for me," he went on in English, "I shall not be worried with a mother-in-law."

Adrian Lyle looked at him in some surprise. He had noticed before that any allusion to his marriage was sure to provoke a sharp or irritable rejoinder.

"On dangerous ground again," said the old suspicions, rising and facing him now, as they had risen and faced him many times before, in silent hours of night, in solitary hours of day. "He is so frank in all else; why not here?"

"There may be an advantage for you in such a case," he said at last, answering Kenyon's remark in his own language. "But I feel sorry always for the man or woman who is motherless; and your wife is so very young."

He said that as an afterthought, looking at the young child-face that was regarding them both, feeling with all the force and fervour of an honest and most tender nature, that there was something strange and pathetic about this lonely young life, given so early and unconsciously to trials and chances of which she knew nothing, with only a young man's rash, hot-headed, impulsive love on which to rest for guidance, for happiness, for her whole life's weal or woe.

"I begin—a little to understand," said Gretchen in her pretty, broken English. "You must talk not secrets before me now. And, indeed, I am not so young," she went on, lapsing into German; "and Neale is to me all and everything; and if I have been lonely and cried for the love of those who are for ever dead and lost, I cried no more when once I found what love was left. And he came just like a fairy prince, and took me into this beautiful new world, and we shall remain there always now—for ever, and ever, and ever!"

"Let us hope so," said Adrian Lyle heartily. "It is not everyone in this world who is fortunate enough to find a fairy prince, or—princess."

Her frank, sweet words had charmed away the demon of suspicion once more.

"I am a grave and sedate person," he went on presently, "and I lost my rose-coloured spectacles long ago—lost them in a fight with the sin, and shame, and suffering that are so constantly about my path. But I have replaced them by glasses of neutral tint which, if not so pretty, are at any rate more useful. Ah," he broke off suddenly, "how beautiful those mountains look in this light! Do you know that a poet once called that Apennine range the 'borderland of Paradise;' it is a pretty fancy, is it not?"

"Yes," said Gretchen dreamily; "it must be a beautiful life, a poet's. To draw one's thoughts from God, and make His works immortal just by a line—a few simple words—that all the world will hear of and remember!"

"Beautiful, yes, but a sad life too," said Adrian Lyle; "for there are many deaf ears in the world, and more who forget than remember. And many a poet has poured out the gold of his soul at thankless ears, and sung his songs to the jeers and derision of an age who could not understand him. Indeed, to be a poet in the true sense of the word, is to be something very different to the rhyming machine, whose watch-cry is 'popularity;' is indeed to suffer for and with humanity with ten-fold sympathy. To ask for bread and receive stones—to look on the children of the world as the Master looked at Jerusalem, lamenting even as He lamented, 'Ye would not!'"

"I remember," said Gretchen timidly, "that the priest in my Church used to warn me against believing what he called 'poet's fables.' Goethe and Heine, and even your great Shakespeare are to me

only names. Neale has told me about Dante, and Byron, and Shelley; one cannot but hear of them here in this land. And are all the beautiful things they wrote fables? It seems to me there must be truth in them—a great deal of truth—if fanciful in its expression."

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle quietly, "there is truth—truth learnt in suffering, immortalised by pain. The outcry of struggling souls, the laments of tortured hearts, the struggle to interpret for others the visions that seem inspired of Heaven, the dreams of deathless love, the anguish of defiant sin: these are truths, however clad; the truths of one common humanity speaking to individual hearts in one common language of joy or sorrow—of hope or pain."

"Are all the priests of your Church like you?" suddenly asked Gretchen.

The blood flushed warm and bright to that grand calm brow of Adrian Lyle.

"No," he said curtly, and then smiled as if some sudden thought amused him. "A priest is but a man, you know, and men are fallible and unstable creatures. The mere fact of being consecrated to the Church's service does not turn one into a pure and sinless being, any more than the sacredness of our calling places us above the needs of the flesh. I think there are more erroneous impressions abroad respecting what is called 'priesthood,' than about any other calling or profession. For myself I frankly tell you I am considered too liberal-minded and eccentric to be in favour with my colleagues. To be a follower of Christ is to my mind a very different thing to following men's doctrines and dogmas. The Rector of my own parish is one of those halting and two-faced dignitaries who have done so much harm for religion, with the very best intention of glorifying the Church. He is in fact a Ritualistic parson of advanced Roman Catholic ideas. Now I am no stickler for one form of religion as superior to another; but I say the simpler the better, and the less the 'man' is dragged in and the Deity left out, the more nearly do we approach the standard of Christ's own teaching. To march about in scarlet trappings one day, and violet another, and white another, is no way of glorifying the Creator. To set more importance upon these outward symbols than on the service itself—as I have known many a Ritualist priest do—is, to my mind, both foolish and sinful. In your Church these are essential parts of the ritual. In fact, I very much doubt if the

in number and equipment, the morale of the English army was by no means high. The onslaught of the Highlanders had proved irresistible on many occasions; their army, though in retreat, had never been beaten; the dim and distant mountains hung like a cloud over the spirits of the Southern troops. Had there been a leader like Montrose to handle the Highland levies, the campaign might have had a widely different result.

But divided and doubtful councils were prevalent among the Highland host. There was discord among the chieftains—there were heart-burnings that even the presence of the enemy could not assuage. On the fourteenth of April, 1746, the Hanoverian army reached Nairn, some twelve miles from Inverness; and, well informed of its movements, Prince Charles and Lord George Murray determined on a night attack and surprise. But in the pitchy darkness of the night, and owing to the weariness of men but poorly fed and ill-supplied, the long march miscarried. Morning found the Highlanders scattered and disordered, still four miles distant from the English camp. Then they fell back wearied and dispirited to Culloden Moor.

Cumberland advanced, and, finding the Highlanders extended on his front, prepared for battle. The Duke had thought out the problem of the Highland rush for himself; he determined to receive it as cavalry is received, in regimental squares with a serried hedge of bayonets. And thus he drew up his army in three lines, with cannon between the squares. The tactics were primitive and simple, but they sufficed.

At the last moment the chances of the Highlanders were destroyed by a point of honour. The Macdonalds claimed the post of honour on the right of the line. It had been theirs ever since Bannockburn, and should they surrender their post to the men of Athol, those miserable Camerons and Stewarts? These last were quite ready to fall upon the Macdonalds, before attacking the Sassenach. Alas for the Gael! here was the fatal rift that runs through all their history, that can be traced even before history begins. Thus the battle began, the cannon opened fire, men began to fall fast. A general advance was ordered; the pipers blew their loudest; the men of Athol rushed forward, broke the first line of the English, and took the guns opposed to them. But where were the Macdonalds?

Immoveable on the left, they sullenly received reiterated orders to fall on. "Let somebody else fight, if the Macdonalds were not to be the first." In vain their chiefs commanded and implored. "Have the children of my tribe forsaken me?" cried Macdonald of Keppoch, as he fell under the enemy's fire, in anguish more bitter than that of death.

By this time the Prince's right attack had spent itself and recoiled, pursued by a destructive fire. The English cavalry advancing threatened the line of retreat, and, judging the battle to be lost, those about the Prince persuaded him to fly. Then the repulse became a rout, and the butchery began which has stained with an indelible disgrace the name of the victor of Culloden. Not only were the fugitives slain without mercy, but the wounded were knocked on the head like so many disabled cattle; and this, not in the heat of combat, but in the days that followed the battle. A number of the wounded had huddled into a barn, and the barn was set on fire as the easiest way of getting rid of them, while strings of helpless captives were fusilladed without mercy.

The Firth of Inverness, with Culloden on its shores and Fort George mounting guard over its entrance, winds farther inland in a land-locked basin known as Beuley Loch, surrounded by a flat and fertile country, whose luxuriant fields of grain offer a strong contrast to the surrounding regions of mountain and moor. This is the pleasant Valley of Beuley, which derives its name—a strange and foreign name for the Highlands—from the little ruined Priory of Beuley, founded in the thirteenth century by Sir John Bisset of Lovat, the descendant of a Norman line, who invited seven French monks from the Abbey of Vallis Caulium to take possession of the home he had built for them. The French monks, agreeably surprised by the aspect of this pleasant valley in the wilderness, gave it the name of Beaulieu.

To the Bissets succeeded the Frasers, originally a Border family, who, in process of time, by increase and adoption assumed the proportions of a powerful clan, although always looked upon with more or less suspicion and dislike by their pure-blooded Gaelic neighbours. The chief of the Frasers, Lord Lovat, still occupies Castle Beaufort in Beuley Valley, the present modern building being, it is said, the thirteenth castle built upon the site. The lands of Clan Fraser stretched

up the Beuley river and among the glens of its tributary streams, and many a hard battle was fought by the clan to guard their soil and gain a trifle from their neighbours. A memorable battle with the Mackintoshes—a clan numerous enough to have eaten the Frasers, had the former not been weakened by internal dissensions—is commemorated by two up-standing stones on the road to Dingwall, two miles north-east of Beuley.

Another battle fought by the Frasers in the sixteenth century is not without interest in its relation to the respective status of clan and chief. The clan Ronald Macdonald occupied Glengarry, and most of the country westward even as far as the Sound of Sleat. Their former chief had married a Fraser, and the son Ronald, who succeeded, on his father's death, to the headship of the tribe, was regarded with jealousy by his clan, as being as much a Fraser as a Macdonald. The Frasers, it has already been said, had an evil reputation among the clans. Their chiefs were credited with crooked and uncanny ways, and a grasping and covetous hankering after their neighbours' lands. Anyhow, Clan Ronald would have none of the Frasers, and deposed their chief, and put his cousin, John Macdonald, in command, and in possession of the lands that, according to tribal law, belonged to the office. The deposed chief appealed to his kinsmen, the Frasers, and the matter was represented to the King as a Highland outrage to be repressed by the strong hand. George Gordon of Huntly was entrusted with the mission to carry fire and sword among the rebellious clansmen, and he was accompanied by a strong force of the Frasers zealous for the enforcement of the law. Gordon, however, was no friend to the Frasers, and had no mind to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. He executed his commission in a friendly way, accommodated matters as to the chieftainship, and brought about a general reconciliation. The Frasers departed on their way home along the great glen when, skirting Loch Lochy on the western side, they saw the Ronalds coming down the hill. There were nearly five hundred of them, in seven companies, marshalled after the admirable traditional tactics of the Highlanders, and the Frasers only mustered three hundred; but the latter at once threw themselves into order of battle, the chief, Lord Lovat, in the centre; his eldest son, the Master of Lovat, taking command of the right, and the

cadet of the house of the left wing of the clan. Then began a fight of heroes—foot to foot, target to target, broadswords ringing on the tough bull's hide, or crashing through a foeman's naked breast. First the eldest son of the Frasers fell, the Master of Lovat; then the old chief himself bit the dust. The descendants of either clan may tell with pride that when the battle ended from sheer exhaustion of the combatants, only four Frasers and ten Ronalds remained alive upon the field.

The great feature of Inverness-shire is indeed the very Glen Mohr or Great Glen, where Frasers and Macdonalds battled so strongly, and through which, in these times, swarms of tourists pass on every summer day in Mr. Macbrayne's excellently equipped steamers. The Glen is a natural cutting; a rent rather, as if torn by some great hand right across Scotland, in its wildest and most mountainous regions. A string of lochs occupies the floor of the Glen, hedged in by great walls of mountains, leaving at places hardly room for a goat-path to wind between. Down to these lochs flow streams and rivers from either hand, sometimes in leaps and bounds, as at Foyers,

Dim, seen through rising mists and ceaseless showers,

sometimes curving through lovely glens, as at Urquhart, where a noble, old, ruined castle mounts guard over the meeting of the waters. Between Loch Oich and Loch Lochy is the natural water-parting. There the waters flow to the Atlantic, and here to the German Ocean; but the floor of the Great Glen is nowhere raised more than a hundred feet above the sea-level. Nature designed the Great Glen, no doubt, reasoned the military advisers of the English Government, to be a bridle upon the wild Highlanders, and with a strong fort at either end of the glen, and a place of arms half-way through, all connected with roads cut out of the mountain side, the Highlanders were indifferently well bridled from the days of the glorious Revolution.

Early in the present century, when canals were favourite enterprises, was commenced the Caledonian Canal, which unites the string of lochs, and forms a water-way between the two seas. It is a work for which lazy or busy travellers may be thankful; for here in all ease and comfort you are carried through some of the wildest and grandest scenes in the Highlands. But the tall ships and argosies

of trading craft, that were expected to make use of it, have never come that way. The works cost over a million, and the traffic almost pays the cost of management and repair. Passenger steamers run to and fro, and an occasional cargo boat, and sometimes a stray brig or schooner may be seen loading or unloading timber or bricks. The herring boats sometimes pass through from the west coast to the east coast fishing, and as many as five hundred of these craft have been seen in one long procession passing over the canal. The sea-gulls follow the passenger steamers from sea to sea, and grow sleek upon the scraps that the cook flings overboard, which sometimes the corbie from the mountain glen will dispute with the sea-going strangers.

Half-way through the glen, in a pleasant green nook, stands Fort Augustus, built in 1716, after the first Jacobite rising, and enlarged by General Wade in 1730; no doubt in anticipation of the next one; when it received its name in honour of William Augustus, the future hero of Culloden. The Jacobites mastered the fort in 1746 after a siege of a couple of days; and, in the same year, William Augustus himself formed his camp about the dismantled fort as a convenient place for doing military execution on the Highlands. The fort was garrisoned till the first year of the Crimean war, by which time the Highlanders had ceased to be formidable to the Government of the day, and the site was sold to the Lord Lovat of the period, whose son gave it to the English Benedictines; and there, among the Highland solitudes, has been reared a Gothic pile, which, when completed, will rival, in dignity and importance, the finest of the old Benedictine Abbeys. But there is a little bit left of the old fort with its grassy mounds, and the sight of Benedictine monks in their dark robes, pacing, breviary in hand, the green glacis of the old fort, calls up curious mingled associations, and a kind of mild wonder at the course of Time and its revenges.

Where the floor of the glen sinks at last into the sea-lochs, which seem to carry on the great rift even into the bed of the Atlantic, Ben Nevis himself mounts guard, his great bulk looming over the bright, green plain below. And there, in the middle of the green plain, in almost savage isolation, is the great feudal Castle of Inverlochy, with its round towers and quaint curtain walls. This was one of the strongholds of the Campbells, and into the green plain, all unexpectedly, out of the dark

defiles of Glen Nevis came Montrose with his Highland army, to beat down his great enemy, Argyle, in the very centre of his power. Argyle, even before the fight, took refuge in one of his galleys in the loch; his courage was of the enduring and not of the pugnacious order, and thence he witnessed the defeat of his clan and the slaughter of his kinsmen.

This green plain, too—a heavenly green in the light of the setting sun with the mountain glowering above, his summit wrapped in thunderous clouds that still assume a thousand rainbow hues—this green plain is the traditional seat of a great city; a kind of Carthage among the Western seas; a city rich and powerful, and the resort of Princes with golden torques; of sages and enchanters full of mystic lore; of bards and of musicians who made the streets vocal with song, and with the strains of the harp. It was the great city of the Gael in the time of his greatness. Here was the royal seat of Achaius, who treated with Charlemagne as an equal. There is no trace of such a city now; nothing but vague tradition to show that it ever existed, and yet somehow we feel that it did exist there, under the gloomy guardianship of Ben Nevis.

A very small substitute for the vanished city is Fort William, the last link in the Highland curb-chain. The fort is one of the oldest of the series, having been built by General Monk originally, and restored by William the Third, after whom it is called. Fort William stood a siege from the Jacobites in 1715 and 1745, and was garrisoned even as lately as 1864, when the last soldier marched out.

People are carried so comfortably along the Great Glen; they see such throngs of tourists; so many people who minister to the wants of tourists have established themselves on the route; that they scarcely realise the desertion and desolation of the Highlands. From the Great Glen to Cape Wrath you might strike a bee-line over the hills, and see no house and meet no living soul. And yet within the memory of men not yet very old, every little glen was populous; regiments of hardy soldiers might have been "lifted," where now is all a dreary solitude, lonely, sad, and unpeopled; where grouse and blackcock nest among the cold hearthstones of deserted hamlets, and the sheep browse on the green patches that mark the abandoned clearings of the banished race.

It is curious, too, to note how scant was

the sympathy of contemporaries for the evicted clansmen. "Of late years," wrote a popular author of fifty years ago, "the landlords have very properly done all they could to substitute a population of sheep for the innumerable hordes of human beings who formerly vegetated upon a soil that seemed barren of anything else."

But among the sorrowful stories that now and then come to light touching the exodus of the Gael from the lands which, however barren, he loved with all the intensity of his nature, there is one pleasant story, with a better ending, which may be found among the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. It is an affair of the Chisholms, whose lands were in Strathfarrar and Strathglass, just above the country of the Frasers.

When Mary, the daughter of the chief, was a young lassie in her teens, four South-countrymen came to see The Chisholm, and passed the night with him at Comar. In the course of the evening it transpired that the Southrons wanted the best of Strathglass for sheep-walks. Mary listened for awhile in silence, but with burning cheeks. At last she started up, unable to contain herself, and cried that "it should never be." Mary was ordered off to bed; but, instead, she found her way to the kitchen, and, while the servants, all Chisholms, gathered about her, wondering and pitying her grief, for the tears were streaming down her cheeks, she related in broken voice the evil that impended over the clan.

Never was fiery cross sent round with more rapidity than this unwelcome news through Strathglass. By morning dawn, on the following day, about a thousand men, old and young, were gathered before Comar House. They demanded that their chief should come out to them. The Chisholm was aroused, and came forward to remonstrate with the clansmen. They would frighten his guests. There was a loud roar of mocking rejoinder. Frighten them! "What," asked the old Gaelic spokesman of the tribe, "what were those men better than the freebooters who came, sword in hand, to drive them from their lands, and whom their forefathers had smitten in the days of old?" "What indeed!" shouted a thousand tongues.

The guests themselves were listening at the windows, amused at first; and then, alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, they stole away to the stables, and, without leave-taking or farewell, rode off halter-skelter at full gallop, followed by

wild shouts of laughter and cries of derision. This happy ending of the matter turned the thoughts of all with affection to their old chief. He was carried on the shoulders of his children through the glen, the pipers strutting before them all. It was the happiest day ever known in Strathglass. And it is pleasant to find that the little daughter of the chief lived a long and happy life, and was always the true friend of her clansmen.

But we must not forget that Inverness-shire has a considerable dominion among the isles, although these deserve, and, perhaps, may receive, a chapter to themselves with the other outlying islands. Skye, however, seems more naturally a part of Inverness, divided as it is from the mainland by a narrow sound, which a Danish Princess once blocked by a chain, so that she might levy toll on all who passed her castle. And Skye is the land of the Macleods and Macdonalds; the former being of Scandinavian origin. The fiery flag of Dunvegan, on which it is said the existence of the house depends, is perhaps a relic of the Crusades. Anyhow, the old castle of Dunvegan, with its family treasures and heirlooms, is of high antiquity, and for time out of mind it has been the eyrie of the Macleods. Then there were the Macrimmons, the hereditary pipers of Dunvegan, so famous for their skill that pupils flocked to the isle from every part of Scotland. Proud of the fame of their pipers, the lairds of Dunvegan endowed a college of music, confined exclusively to pipers, on an adjoining premonitory, and here some of the most famous of the fraternity received their training. Early in the present century, however, a dispute occurred between patron and professor, and the Macrimmon of the day shook the dust from his feet and departed. Since then the Pipers' College has been closed and its halls deserted.

Macleods and Macdonalds, if they agreed in nothing else, were united in devotion to the Jacobite cause. Some three thousand men from Skye joined the Earl of Mar and fought at Sheriffmuir, and, in connection with the rising of 1715, occurred one of those strange incidents which proverbially outstrip fiction. Years before, the daughter of Cheivaly of Dalry, a fiery and headstrong race, had married Erskine of Grange, eventually Lord Justice Clerk and Lord Grange. The marriage was as unhappy as could be; the lady came to hate her husband, and he cordially reciprocated the

feeling. Lord Grange was brother to the Earl of Mar, the Chevalier's chief agent, and was naturally implicated, notwithstanding his high judicial office, in all the Jacobite plots of the period. Lady Grange's sympathies were all the other way; she played the spy upon her husband, waited, watched, and overheard, till at last she had in her possession evidence enough to bring her husband's, and many other distinguished heads, to the scaffold. Then she was surprised and detected in her turn, and the question arose, how to silence her for ever.

Macleod and Macdonald of Skye were of course implicated in the Jacobite plot, and their power among the lonely islands of the West favoured the scheme which was decided upon. Lady Grange was announced to be dangerously ill—to be dead. A mock funeral was arranged, and a coffin filled with stones was deposited in the family burial-ground. In the meantime, under trusty escort, Lady Grange was spirited away to the islands, first of all to North Uist, and then to lonely, desolate St. Kilda, where she was kept prisoner for seven years. At the end of that time she was brought back to Skye, and allowed a certain amount of freedom. She was permitted to make herself useful by spinning and winding wool, after the fashion of the women of the island; but she contrived to baffle the vigilant watch that was still kept upon her, and to enclose a letter to one of her old friends in a ball of yarn. The wool found its way to Edinburgh, the letter was found and forwarded to its address. The friend told the story to the authorities; a sloop of war was sent to Skye and a thorough search was made in the island; but Lady Grange was never found. Sometimes she was concealed in a lonely cavern; as pursuit grew hotter, she was forwarded in a boat to Uist. There was a running noose round her neck, and attached to the noose a heavy stone. The master of the boat had his orders. Should the Government ship heave in sight, over goes the lady.

When the search died away, Lady Grange was brought back to Skye. Her faculties probably were enfeebled by her long imprisonment and the hardships she had undergone. At last she died, and even then precautions were taken against her identification. A formal burial of an empty coffin took place in the parish graveyard of Duirinish; but the body was secretly interred in Waternish, where she died.

More romantic, even if not so sensational, is the story of Flora Macdonald, the well-

known preserver of Prince Charles Edward, whom she smuggled to the mainland in the disguise of her female servant; although the awkwardness of the Prince in managing his petticoats had more than once nearly betrayed him. For her share in the Prince's escape, Flora was committed to the Tower. But her imprisonment was rather a triumph than a punishment. All the great people visited her; the Prince of Wales himself—that Prince Fred, who was not a bad fellow, after all—heard her story with emotion, and moved heaven and earth to set her free. Then she married Allan Macdonald, of Kingsburgh, and went to North Carolina, but returned when the troubles began in the Colonies. Coming home, she helped to fight a French privateer. The rest of her life she spent quietly in Skye, where she died in 1790. Flora Macdonald had five sons and two daughters, the former all officers in the army, and the latter officers' wives; but no direct descendants of hers, it is believed, survive. Flora was buried in the graveyard of Kilmuir, and three thousand people were present at her funeral, "all liberally served with refreshment." And yet there is no monument to her memory, or was not recently, although every now and then some stir has been made to erect one.

A WELCOME.

GIVE me your hand. Oh, brother! see where rises
The bright New Year, clad in her pearl-white vest.
Her golden hair, that veils the sweet surprises
Held to her heart, streams o'er the sunset west.
Hiding the year that all too slow is dying,
Drying the tears that we therein have shed;
Her laughing voice doth sound above the sighing
That comes from those who'd mourn the year just dead.

Why should we mourn? True, some have gone before us;

Of them we know naught, save they've gone away.
Their voices failing from the merry chorus,

That once was wont to greet the rising day!
Their hands no longer with our hand-clasp meeting,
Their feet no longer pausing at our door,
Still they are gone; so, why should we be "greeting"?

We live; we love; and hail New Year once more.

True, in the year that now dies sad and lonely.

Our hearts were wrung, and disappointment's lore
Was ours most fully; things we deemed most holy
Showed their real selves, their great and secret sore.
Were we not foolish thus to vex and whimper?

Life has for us exactly what we take.

If for a smile she gives a vacuous simper,
Are hearts so brittle that of this they'd break?

The bells are tolling; dead he lies! Arise,

Our sweet young Queen holds out her pretty hands.
Let Hope once more unlock our self-made prison,

Let us arise and face Life's robber-bands!

Smile with the tear, pain, pleasure mixed together,

Come with the fair year that was born to-night!

There's nothing new; only can we say whether

Our sky shall be overcast or clearly bright?

CONCERNING SLAVIES.

IN the sense that she neither receives nor requires any training to fit her for her work, the slavey, like the poet, is born, not made. If she happen to have any inherent aptitude for domestic labour, such aptitude is, in her case, the prosaic parallel to the poet's native wood-note wild, and it is exercised upon the principle by which the poet

Lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

If she be possessed of such aptitude, so much the better for herself. She is the more likely to speedily emerge from the slavey condition; the less likely to "put up" with the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," in the shape of fault-finding, abuse, threats, and "jawing" generally, the sufferance of which is the badge of all her tribe. It is her powers of endurance in this respect, more even than in respect to hard living and hard work, that differentiates the slavey from the servant. In both respects she is sometimes called upon to endure so constantly and so greatly, that doubtless she oftentimes wishes she never had been born; or, if she has any unconscious touch of philosophy in her composition, wonders why she was born. At any rate, most other people would certainly regard her life as not worth living.

The use of the word "slavey" has been greatly extended of late years, being often applied generally to all female servants, save those of "upper" rank. The slavies here in view, however, are the "real original, and only genuine articles," the miserable, and perforce dirty and slatternly little maids-of-all-work, of whom, as a type, the "Marchioness" was rather an accentuation than an exaggeration. Servants unto servants are they, for they are largely employed by the poorest class of lodging-house keepers. In most other instances they are servants to those who can only afford to keep a servant at all by working them hard and paying them poorly.

Slavies are veritable grubs of the human species, and, as with other grubs, the fortunate ones among them develop into a chrysalis state, become such gorgeous creatures—by comparison—as sewing-machine girls, or, general servants proper: general servants, that is, of the type that wears coquettish caps; has morning, and evening, and "best" dresses; and patronises the elder, and flirts with the younger butchers', and bakers', and grocers' men; the type that

stands upon its rights in the matter of beer or beer-money, monthly holidays, evenings and Sundays out, and followers; that "flounces" if chidden; gives warning on slight provocation; and puts would-be mistresses to the question as to their methods of household management—the type of general servant, in short, that is regarded, and not without good cause, as the greatest plague in life. That this should be a predominating type of general servant is, in a large measure, due to the fact that the ranks of the "generals" are largely recruited from the slavies. The position is a social Nemesis—the reaping by one class of society of what another has sown—Nature's avengement of the wrongs of the slavey.

The slavey is usually the daughter of "poor, but honest parents." It is the parental poverty and honesty that combine to make her a slavey. The families of such parents increase, while their means of support do not. To continue in honesty of life; to pay as they go, and owe not any man; they must put their children out in the world early. When a girl is concerned, and the going out means entering domestic service, such service as is open to her must be accepted, and that is service of the slavey kind. On this point the law of "must" applies with a twofold force, being operative upon the side of the mistress as well as upon that of the maid. The parents cannot supply the girl with the outfit, lacking which no servant would be taken in any better-class servant's place. Even if the necessary dress could be provided, few mistresses of the better class would care to take as a servant a girl of thirteen, nor probably a girl of any age coming from such a home as a slavey usually comes from in the first instance. On the other hand, the style of mistress whose poverty or will consents to her having a slavey by way of servant, is either unwilling or unable—the latter as a rule—to offer the wages, accommodation, or privileges, without which no regular "general" would "demean herself" to accept a situation.

Sometimes the employer of the slavey is a wife and mother, of the artisan class, whose family is growing up around her. As they get older, the boys and girls require more and more "doing for." Martha, who is apprenticed to the millinery business, not only objects to black her own boots any longer, but thinks it "hard on her" that she should be expected to help mother even in the lighter household

duties. She contends, and probably with truth, that she has quite enough of work at business. Her brother Bill, who is in the third year of his "time," also objects to boot-blackening, on the ground that it is derogatory to manly dignity. Moreover, in his degree, he begins to develope "masher" propensities. When in the evening he casts his skin, so to speak, by putting off his working clothes, he is desirous of coming out strong in the matter of cuff and collar and shirt-front—and in that respect he has a soul above paper. Brother and sister alike wax more particular about their food; not as to its quantity, which is always sufficient, or its quality, which is always sound; but in the matter of having hot and set meals. They have friends of their own age come to see them, and will use the "best" room on week-day evenings, and insist upon things generally being in spick and span order so far as may be. Thus the household work and washing is increased, until "mother" is driven to declare that it is too much for one pair of hands, and that she must have help. If the young folks are adding to the domestic labours, they are also contributing to the family income, the total of which is now sufficient to afford payment for the assistance mother requires. That she shall have help is agreed "nem. con.;" and after a family council as to whether the help shall take the shape of a washerwoman or charwoman one or two days a week, or the engagement of a slavey, the votes of the youngsters decide the point in favour of the latter course, and a slavey is accordingly engaged.

The slavey, at the commencement of her career, at any rate, is usually a willing little creature, and in such a household as we are here contemplating, the burden laid upon her is calculated to tax to the utmost both her will and strength. She finds herself very literally a maid-of-all-work. She is boot-black, knife-cleaner, stove-polisher, and floor-scrubber. She stands to the washtub with her mistress, and helps to hang out the clothes. If she shows any "native talent" for the more skilled operations of starching and ironing, she is taught to assist in them also; while if she lacks such talent, she is heartily "dratted" for the want of it. As kitchen-maid, the potato-peeling, pea-shelling, vegetable-washing, and the like, fall to her share; and in this connection she finds herself to a considerable extent between two stools. Over this, no less than over other work, the constant cry of the "missis" is "look

sharp!" but here the slavey has others to consider besides missis, and her desire is rather to be sure than sharp. Master, she has to bear in mind, is "werry particular" as to the prompt and proper preparation of his meals; and young Bill more so. If at dinner time "eyes" are found in the potatoes, she is more than "dratted;" while should it chance that a boiled caterpillar is served up with the cabbage, it will be well for her that she should not be in the way to answer the waked wrath of Master Bill at the moment the unappetising discovery is made. He might be tempted to shy the dish at her. Now that they have got a slavey, Bill, who tries in all things to "come the man," thinks it dignified and "the thing" to be waited upon. He will have the slavey unlace his boots, bring his slippers, search for his mislaid tobacco-pouch, and fetch and carry for him. Mother sometimes objects to this on the ground that it takes her maid-of-all-work from more legitimate and pressing occupations, to which Bill replies that it is no use keeping a dog and barking yourself. That, for the time being—for as yet he is but in his green and salad days—is Bill's notion of an epigram; and it is rather with a view to being epigrammatic than out of any real want of feeling that he answers thus. Nevertheless, on the principle that evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart, "Bill's ways" are hard upon the slavey. Martha, as becomes her sex, is cast in gentler mould than her brother; but she too, in her milder way, claims suit and service at the hands of the slavey, exacting from her whatever help in the cruder forms of lady's-maiding she may be capable of rendering.

One way or another the slavey has an exceedingly busy time of it. She is kept hard at it from morning till night, and though but a child, has ample and practical proof of the truth of the saying "that a woman never knows when her day's work is done." That, so far as her strength will allow, she should do the most laborious and drudgical portions of the house-work is taken as a matter of course; and though she is bound to get through it, she is not permitted to stick to it systematically. That she is entitled to any consideration upon that point is a thing undreamed of in the philosophy of her employers. She is expected to be generally and constantly at beck and call. With her arms wet or face smudged she is called from floor scrubbing or fire-grate cleaning to go upon an errand.

"Running of errands" is a leading feature in her work. The slavey does not wear caps: she cannot "find herself" in them, and her mistress does not feel called upon to find them. Beside, though the cap goes well with the natty aprons, and neat cotton frocks, which are the ordinary wear of the better class of general servants, it would simply serve to show up the shabbiness and dinginess of the rest of the slavey's attire. As a rule she has only the garments she stands up in; and even if she had others, she would not be allowed the time necessary for changing and rechanging her dress, upon each occasion that she was sent upon an errand. Thus it happens that in all weathers and at all times in the day—though more especially when meal times are approaching—she may be seen scuffling along the streets bare-headed, bare-armed, down at heel, and not infrequently waving in her hand as she goes, the red-backed memorandum book, which to the initiated indicates that her mistress has a credit account with some of her tradespeople. The slavey is expected to shop promptly, accurately, and economically, and that she is usually capable of doing. The poverty of her own home has the effect of making such a girl keen in this respect. Moreover, when shopping for her mistress, the slavey does so at her own risk, so to speak. Should she, over a ready-money transaction, bring the change short in amount, or with a bad or doubtful coin in it, she must go back and compel the tradesman to rectify the matter, or else make good the loss out of her own scanty pay. Or if any article with which she allows herself to be served is held not to be of the kind ordered, or not up to sample in point of quality, she must get it exchanged, or obtain back the money paid for it. These are anything but pleasant phases of the shopping business, as shopkeepers are apt to "ride rusty" over them; but of course it is not to be supposed that a slavey has any such thing as sensitiveness in her character. Feeling or sentiment on the part of a slavey would be regarded as affectation or presumption. Indeed, that she should be subject to even the physical ills that flesh in general is heir to, is looked upon as being almost in the nature of an intentional offence upon her part. And she is a good deal subjected to some of those ills. In the winter months she has usually a cold upon her, and suffers from "chapped" hands and chilblained feet. But that she should complain—"make a song"—her mistress would probably call it—about

her ailments, or should cough, or limp, or shrink from putting her hands into soda-impregnated "suds"—that she should do such things as these, is accounted as part of her aggravating ways; like smashing the crockery or "scrunching" cinders on the carpets.

In the service of a well-to-do working class household the slavey has perhaps her best type of place, though, as will have been gathered from what has been stated above, that is not saying much. In such a household she will be sure of good food and plenty of it, and she will feel more at home than she would do in more ambitious establishments. It is in a household of that stamp that she has her best opportunities of learning to be a competent servant. The mistress is, as a rule, a good all-round worker. She teaches her maid-of-all-work by example as well as precept, and has her constantly under her own eye. If the family treat her in a rough-and-ready fashion, it is not from any snobbish notions of class distinction; it is because it is their nature to, because they are themselves rough and ready.

Another type of place that falls to the lot of the slavey is that in which the mistress has to earn part—not infrequently the greater part—of the family income by taking in dressmaking, or keeping a small shop, or something of that kind. Women so situated are often young mothers, so that in these cases there is the chance of a nursemaid's duty being added to the more ordinary work of the slavey. This is bad for the slavey; but it is worse for the baby. In a place of this kind the slavey is a good deal left to her own devices. The mistress has not time to look after her thoroughly, and, generally speaking, is herself not much of a hand in the matter of domestic management. As a consequence, it is here that the slavey touches the highest point of all her greatness in the way of slatternliness. Under such conditions of domestic existence the slavey gains nothing in the way of training. When she leaves her place, it is not to take higher rank as a servant—she is unfit for that—but, generally, for some of the less skilled and more poorly paid factory employment in which female hands are engaged.

So far as the quantity of work exacted from her goes, the slavey finds her hardest place in the house whose mistress—though not calling herself a lodging-house keeper, and not wholly dependent upon her "lettings"—still takes in lodgers and "does

for them." Here the slavey has worry as well as work. The lodgers badger and order about the mistress, and she passes it on to her drudge with interest. But if mistress and maid have their jars, their relations are not altogether of a jarring order. The principle that a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind comes in with a softening influence. There are times when the mistress is so "put out" over the doings—or, as she considers them, the misdoings—of her lodgers, that she feels that she must speak, and, having no one else at hand to speak to, unbosoms herself to her assistant. In these moments of confidence, mistress and maid cordially unite in discussing and criticising, and, it may be, anathematising the lodgers. They are as friends and equals in denouncing the fidgettiness upon the subject of table linen of the parlour ladies—maiden sisters of uncertain age—or the "expectingness" of the second-floor sitting-and-bedroom-combined young man, "who throws off his sneers" because his tea-dinner is not always served hot and on the instant, though he does not come home to it with punctuality. Such points as these come home to the business and bosom alike of landlady and slavey, and make them of one mind and one tongue. But none are all evil—not even lodgers. In a place of this kind the slavey finds certain compensations for the hard work imposed upon her. The lodgers are not boarders, they "find themselves," and the slavey falls heir to a share of the broken dainties that come from their tables. The lodgers are wont to assert that in this matter the slavey stands not on the order of her getting. If the good things come to her by deed of gift, well and good, they are thankfully received and keenly appreciated. When they are not given to her, she—according to the allegation of the lodgers—reverts to first principles, and goes in for self-help in the literal interpretation of the term. As a matter of fact it must be admitted that the average slavey will pick, when tempted by the sight and savours of viands which to her are rich and rare. On this point the flesh is weak with her, but apart from the food question she is passing honest. If she is found wearing the cast-off garments of lady lodgers, they will have been presented to her. In the same way if at Christmas or other holiday times she is found flush of money—for a slavey, that is—it is because the lodgers, whether men or women, having some of the milk of human

kindness in their nature, have "remembered" the little household drudge in current coin of the realm.

The last and worst class of slavey situation is that of the "let-us-be-genteel-or-die" order. The sort of place in which the mistress is poor but genteel—even more genteel than poor. Such a mistress attempts to play the rôle of the fine lady upon the strength of one poor slavey. It is against the canons of such pitiful gentility as hers that she should do anything "menial;" and her chief desire, in relation to household affairs, is to be able to boast that "she does not need to soil her hands." As a consequence, the whole of the domestic labours of the establishment is, as far as possible, put upon the slavey. It is an essential feature of gentility of this stamp to pinch wherever pinching can be effected without meeting the eye. One result of this is that, in a poor but genteel place, the slavey is underfed as well as overworked. Hard work and hard fare, however, she might stand; it is generally upon a side issue, the question of answering the door, that the relations between mistress and maid become strained. It is held to be an attestation of gentility that a servant should answer the door, otherwise there could be no genteel ceremony of taking in the names of callers, or ascertaining whether mistress is at home, or the like. Moreover, if the mistress answered the door herself, she might be suspected of not having a servant, of having to soil her hands. But the slavey is not only called upon to open the door, she is found fault with for not being presentable when she does open it. At this even the slavey—the domestic worm—turns. And it certainly is unreasonable to expect any girl to double the parts of slavey and "neat-handed Phyllis." With the slavey Nature is subdued to what it works in—dirt. She is almost literally clothed in sackcloth and ashes. An old sack, which can be purchased for two or three pence, will split up into a couple of over-all aprons, and a sack apron of this description fastened on by an extemporised harness of rough twine, is the favourite wear of the representative slavey. Sacking absorbs dirt freely, and it is not "a washing material." After a little wear a sack apron becomes so dirt-stiffened that it would scarcely be a figure of speech to say of it that it would stand alone, while the hands and face of the slavey are always abundantly grimed and smudged. To use

the old joke, the slavey is a daughter of the soil, with a good deal of her mother on her face. In the kitchen she is more or less in harmony with her environment, but, summoned from the lower regions to answer the door in a cottage of gentility, she is certainly a comically incongruous figure. But that is not her fault, and, as already intimated, she resents being rated for it as though it were. The individual slavey rarely stays long in a genteel place, and after a time a mistress of the genteel order has often a difficulty in getting a slavey at all. There is a certain degree of freemasonry among the slaves of any given district, and the boycotting of a bad place is by no means unknown among them. Though the genteel mistress will rarely give her late slavey a character, the slaves are always prepared to give her one, though hardly of a kind that she would care to use as a testimonial.

Numbers of those who employ slaves are not in a position to afford them sleeping accommodation, and the girls have to trudge to and fro—often considerable distances—morning and night. In wet and cold weather this is no slight hardship to girls who are poorly clad and ill shod, and who, as a class, suffer greatly from chapped hands and chilblained feet. When the slavey does sleep at her place, the sleeping arrangements provided for her are usually of an uncomfortable, not to say unhealthy, character. If she has what is, by courtesy, called a room to herself, it is generally some cornered-off, unventilated space more in the nature of a cupboard than a room proper, while very often she has to sleep by night in the underground kitchen in which she works by day, a makeshift bed being rigged up each night and cleared away each morning.

As previously hinted, the whirligig of time brings its revenges to the slavey. If she takes *Excelsior* for her motto, and rises to still higher spheres than that of a "regular" general servant, she can come out strong with those who were her mistresses in her slavey days. If she attains to the position of nurse or housemaid in an establishment the heads whereof are in society, and keep a full rank of servants, she is regarded as a desirable acquaintance by those who are or seek to be dwellers on the threshold of gentility. They know, of course, that she is not the rose, but she lives near it. She can tell not only of high life below stairs, but of the sayings and doings of "our people." If the family

in whose service she is engaged happens to be titled, as well as rich, and she can talk of "my Lady" and "my Lord," or even "Sir John," her position is by so much the stronger. To those who care to listen to a servant's gossip about her "people," such gossip is "as good as a novel." Probably that is the case to a greater extent than such listeners wot of. Even when founded on fact, a servant's chatter about her "people" has generally a good deal of fiction in it; in that connection your servant is a ready romancer. To see a servant of the upper circles patronising her former mistress of—let us say—the lower middle class, and enlightening her as to the habits and customs of the aristocracy, is an amusing bit of comedy in real life. Apart even from the humour of the situation, there are often enough genuine though unconscious touches of comedy in the dialogue. If, however, the particular "people" concerned could hear their servant's stories of their lives, they would probably be more amazed than amused. But let the galled jade wince; to those whose withers are unwrung the thing is laughable.

Though here it is chiefly the woes of the slaves that have been dwelt upon, there has been no desire to inferentially represent the slavey as a perfect character. She is far from being the faultless monster that the world ne'er saw. Often enough she is more or less incapable, and, in some instances, she is slatternly by nature, as well as by force of circumstances. That she occasionally has a weakness for "tolling" food has already been admitted, and, generally speaking, she is great in the glass and crockery breaking line. In this connection she is not given to vexing the soul of her mistress by mentioning any disaster that may not have attracted immediate attention, and, if put to the question upon such a point, her answers are framed with a greater regard to expediency than to truth. She will loiter when "going on errands;" she has been known to wax impudent, and in these latter days she is much addicted to secretly devoting to the perusal of "penny dreadfuls" time which ought to be, and is supposed to be, devoted to work. All this, however, only amounts to saying that the slavey is very human. Taking one consideration with another, her life is not a happy one. On the whole, she is more sinned against than sinning; more to be pitied than blamed.

Time was when slaves were chiefly

drawn from workhouse schools, and in those days it sometimes befell that unfortunate pariah orphans found themselves in the clutches of mistresses of the Mother Brownrigg stamp. A generation ago, cases of grossly inhuman treatment of parish apprentices and servants were of comparatively frequent occurrence. But

After the Martyr, the Deliverer comes.

The discovery, from time to time, of the sufferings to which such friendless boys and girls were subjected led to a radical improvement in this respect. The Guardians of the Poor are, in the present day, really and practically guardians to orphans officially committed to their charge. Persons now wishing to engage servants from Union schools can only do so upon the principle of "references exchanged." They can have their choice of such girls as may be eligible for service, but they are called upon to satisfy the Guardians that they are in a position to offer a comfortable home and proper sleeping accommodation. The Guardians on the one hand supply such an outfit as will enable the girl to make a cleanly and respectable appearance as a servant, and on the other hand make it a specific condition of the contract that they or their officers are to have the right of periodical visitation, with a view to satisfying themselves that the girl is being properly cared for in her place. By the class who employ slaves these conditions are regarded as being "too blessed particular," and they do not "trouble the Union." As a result among the poor, the pauper girl, if commencing life as a domestic servant, will be able to start in a higher grade than the non-pauper girl. It is from the non-pauper classes that the slaves are now drawn. To any philanthropist in search of a mission we would suggest the establishment of an institution, that should do for girls of the non-pauper class what the Guardians do for the pauper class. If such an institution could be made generally operative, we would have more and better servants and fewer slaves, a state of affairs by which employers and employed would alike benefit.

ON THE SELF-PERCEPTION OF GREATNESS.

JOHN RUSKIN has said that "the gods mercifully hide from great men the knowledge how great they are." This is a doctrine that requires considerable modi-

fication before it can be generally accepted. There is abundant evidence that many of the world's greatest warriors, poets, and statesmen had a very exalted notion of their own influence, not only over their own times, but over all time. Alexander the Great was so enamoured of his own performances, that he desired divine honour while yet on earth, and put to death the philosopher who reproved him for the impiety. Lysurgus was so charmed with the beauty and greatness of his political establishment, that he desired to make it immortal, and took singular means to do so. Assembling the people, he exacted from them an oath that they would inviolably observe all his laws, without altering anything in them until he returned from Delphi, whither he was going to consult the oracle. On arriving there, however, he put an end to his life, so that the citizens could never be relieved from the obligation they had taken. Horace boasted that his fame would extend as far as the banks of the Rhone, and as that poet died in the century immediately preceding the Christian Era, the vaunt was equivalent to an avowal that his renown would reach to the uttermost parts of the earth. Ovid is still more emphatic in the declaration of his belief in his own greatness. In the peroration to the *Metamorphoses* there is a passage which may be translated thus: "And now I have completed a work, which neither the anger of Jove, nor fire, nor steel, nor consuming time will be able to destroy! Let that day, which has no power but over this body, put an end to the term of my uncertain life, when it will; yet, in my better part, I shall be raised immortal above the lofty stars, and indelible shall be my name. And wherever the Roman power is extended throughout the vanquished earth, I shall be read by the lips of nations, and (if the presages of poets have sought of truth), throughout all ages shall I survive in fame."

Pietro Aretino, who lived from 1492 to 1557, may not be classed as a great man, though he is still widely read. He, however, not only believed that his fame would last for ever; but that his prurient verses were divinely inspired, and that his satires would for ever entitle him to be called "the scourge of Princes."

It is not necessary, however, to refer either to ancient times, or to foreign countries, to illustrate the matter under consideration. So little is known of

Shakespeare's private life that it is impossible to ascertain what opinion he had of his own marvellous genius, and his retirement to an obscure mode of living might suggest a modest conception of his importance. In Sonnet LV., however, he says:

Not marble, not the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;

adding, that the subject of the sonnet shall shine bright "in these contents," and

... Your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.

It is seen, therefore, that Shakespeare had a tolerably clear notion that he could write something that would live; and this view is emphasised, if it be true, as some authorities urge, that Shakespeare's "Sonnets" are merely fanciful exercises, and had no living subject whatever.

Passing from Shakespeare to Wordsworth, it is found that the Gramscrope poet spoke of his own writings in language which, uttered by any one else, would have been styled braggadocio. His poems were not at first very well received, and in reply to a friend who condoled with him, Wordsworth wrote: "Trouble not yourself about their present reception. Of what moment is that compared to what, I trust, is their destiny!—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel; and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which, I trust, they will faithfully perform long after we are mouldered in our graves." And of his "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty" he says: "I would boldly say at once that these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do, at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day." Again, to Southey he wrote: "Let the age continue to love its own darkness; I shall continue to write with, I trust, the light of Heaven upon me." It would not be difficult to give many other instances of this self-apprehension of greatness in many other poets. Byron at a very early age recognised that he was "famous," and the notion rather grew upon him than otherwise. Oliver

Goldsmith, who seemed to court the praise of his contemporaries and to care little for that of posterity, still declared that "The Deserted Village" would cause his name to live. Henry Kirke White, who surely was modest enough, yet described even his earliest poems as "very respectable." Burns, who certainly did not over-estimate his own splendid genius, knew, however, that his reputation would live, and when near his end showed great concern about his literary fame, fearing that attempts would be made to injure and debase it. The same self-recognition of genius marks some writers yet living. Mr. Edwin Arnold is the most recent instance. Every one who has read his "Light of Asia" must have admired the beauty of its numbers, the elegance of its diction, and the sweetness of its cadence. It is doubtful, however, if anyone has foretold such a future for his works as he has himself prophesied. In the dedication to his daughter of "The Secret of Death" and other poems, he boasts "I know my verse shall henceforth live on lips to be, in hearts as yet unbeating," that "The East and West will some day give . . . late praise to him who dreamed it."

Others than poets have had similar presages, though these are expressed in less florid periods. This is natural. Poets have a licence of language and of thought, not permitted to those who are incapable of vivid imagery, and who write or talk ordinary prose. These, however, are equally emphatic in their declarations. In cataloguing such men two classes may be dispensed with. The first consists of those who are regarded as founders of religions. With the remarkable exception of the Budha, who pretended to nothing supernatural, founders of religion, from Mahomet (who was, perhaps, sincere) to Joseph Smith (who was certainly an impostor), have all pretended to a divine or supernatural revelation and influence. A declaration of the immortality of their spoken and written words was part of their programmes or policies, and as it is difficult to say whether they themselves believed what they said and wrote, it is not necessary to introduce them here. Secondly, the authors of autobiographies may be put aside, or rather merely referred to en masse. When a person writes his own life, or, as in the case of Dr. Johnson, artistically comports himself to his acknowledged biographer, it is evident that he believes he has lived a life which ought to be recorded, and

that, having done something for posterity, it is only right that posterity should do something for him. This very action on the part of such persons shows that they had a consciousness of their own importance in and to the world.

Coming to others, a few only shall be instanced, and these merely mentioned. It is evident that both Olive and Wallenstein believed they were reserved for something great, simply because of the failure of their attempts to commit suicide, though it cannot be said that either had then shown much promise of making a mark in the world. Sir Robert Peel plainly declared that, by his abolition of the Corn Law, he had earned the gratitude of every cottager in the kingdom. Mr. Bright prophesied that those who opposed that reform would be forgotten, while those who conducted the agitation which accomplished it would live in the hearts of their countrymen; and it would have been, and would be, mock-modesty not to include himself amongst the foremost of those to whom he prophesied fame. Sir Isaac Newton knew the value of his discoveries, and his modesty in describing them as pebbles gathered from the beach of an unexplored ocean does not detract from, but emphasises, the knowledge. Fielding likened himself to "those heroes who, of old times, became voluntary sacrifices to the good of the public;" and many others might be added to those names which have been selected merely for the variety of their respective vocations.

Recurring to Ruskin's dictum already quoted, it may be urged that what he meant was that great men are unconscious of the quantity of their greatness—that, for instance, Mahomet could not foresee that the empire he founded would extend from Persia to Spain; or that Ovid and Horace could not imagine themselves delighting millions of readers in England, America, and Australia. This, however, would be a very strained construction. Carlyle utters the sentiment intended to be conveyed much more clearly, when he says: "Your true hero is ever unconscious that he is a hero: this is a condition of all greatness." It must be admitted that there is much corroboration of such a maxim, and all that has been maintained here is that it is not universally applicable. Against Ovid's bold presage may be quoted Virgil's death-bed request, that the MS. of his *Æneid* should be burnt, because of its imperfections, which he had not had time to

remedy. Coleridge neither expected nor wished for fame, poetry itself having been to him its own "exceeding great reward." Shelley wrote to Leigh Hunt: "I am, and I desire to be nothing;" which was doubtless true, or he would not have buried the sparkling gems of his genius in such a mass of twaddle, as he and everyone else admits much that he wrote to be. The late Earl of Shaftesbury, too, was content that his works and not his name should live. "I do not wish to be recorded," he said; and yet, if ever man deserved recording, it was surely he.

It remains to add, that nothing is here urged as detracting from great men because of the knowledge of their greatness. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine how a man, strong in, and true to, his convictions, can do otherwise than recognise his greatness, especially when the fruit of his labours is before his eyes. It certainly requires greater prescience to foresee that ages yet to come will realise the truths and the wisdom presently despised, but the difference is merely one of degree; and while many men may be great and know it not, fully as many, if not more, see themselves as others see them, and feel that they have earned a fame that will never perish.

HOW I STRUCK OIL.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

"AND so you've got just twelve months in which to raise ten thousand pounds!"

"Yes."

"And, of course, if you can't raise it, Wylie forecloses and secures the estate!"

"That is so."

"Do you think there's the remotest possibility that you will get the money?"

"Well yes, I do."

"I am afraid you're deceiving yourself. You might, of course, borrow such a sum on the estate itself, provided it were unencumbered, but, when it is already mortgaged up to that amount, no one in his senses would advance you a penny on it; for you know that, since it was mortgaged, the property has fallen to something like half of its original value owing to your uncle's careless management."

"But, my dear sir, I have no intention of borrowing the money. I mean to make it."

At these brave words Polly looked at me proudly and gave me a little caressing

pat on the arm, while old Gunson, Polly's father, grinned sardonically.

"Do you know any trade or business?"

"No."

"Have you studied any profession?"

"No."

"Have you tested your value in the labour market?"

"No, not yet. But I mean to."

Mr. Gunson lit a cigar and smoked deliberately.

"A fortnight ago," he said grimly, "I wanted a junior clerk. I advertised. The salary, remember, was fifty pounds a year. I had nearly two hundred applications. If you had been one of those applicants, my boy, I shouldn't have accepted you. Educated as you have been at Eton and Oxford, it wouldn't be worth my while to pay you ten shillings a week."

I was naturally rather nettled; Polly was indignant. But old Gunson smoked on with perfect placidity.

"I have no intention of becoming a junior clerk," I answered. "If I go in for business at all, it shall be as a principal."

"I know three young men who started business on their own account several months ago," replied Mr. Gunson. "They had each a nice little sum to begin with, more, I think, than you can possibly command, and, moreover, they had all been thoroughly well trained, and were good business men. Within a year one failed; another drew out and went to New Zealand; and the remaining one makes, I should think, about a hundred and fifty pounds a year and considers himself lucky to do so."

"I suppose they went on in a jog-trot sort of way," I said impatiently. "That isn't my line at all. I shouldn't stick in the mud like that. I should speculate."

"Indeed," said old Gunson sarcastically.

"I've had a large acquaintance with speculators. I knew a man who, a fortnight ago, was worth fifty thousand pounds. He isn't worth a penny now."

"I suppose he was reckless. Went in for anything that turned up."

"Nothing whatever of the sort. He's one of the longest headed men on 'Change. Plodding, cautious, and as sharp as a razor."

I was silent for the moment, and felt small and uncomfortable. Polly took up the cudgels on my behalf.

"I think it's very unkind of you, papa, to discourage Jack in that way. Just because those stupid men couldn't make money quickly, it doesn't follow that Jack can't."

"Fiddlesticks, child! I'm only telling him the facts of the case. What's the good of his building castles in the air that haven't the slightest foundation in reality. It's better to tell him the plain truth at once, instead of letting him deceive himself. It's only in fairy tales and novels, that men in Jack's position make ten thousand pounds in a single year. In actual life it's an impossibility."

"Not for Jack," said Polly.

"For Jack or anyone else, and he'd better realise it at once. Still, I don't want to be hard on him. I'll give him a chance. If he can raise the money in twelve months, and pay off the mortgage, I shall oppose your engagement no longer."

"Thank you, Mr. Gunson; thank you—thank you," I cried, wringing his hand affectionately.

Mr. Gunson repossessed himself of the shaken member.

"Gently, gently, my boy," he said ruefully. "My bones are not so young as they used to be. And then you mustn't forget the other side of the bargain. If you don't pay off the mortgage, I will never consent to your engagement with Polly. You understand me clearly. There must be no doubt about that."

Polly left the couch on which we had been sitting side by side, and knelt by her father's chair.

"Papa," she said, caressing his hand and looking wistfully into his face, "you're not really in earnest, are you? You're only joking?"

"Not a bit of it, my girl. I'm as solemn as a tombstone."

"And do you really think there isn't the least chance of Jack paying off the mortgage?"

"Well, in the ordinary course of things I don't suppose there is. It would be nothing short of a miracle if he did."

Polly laid her soft cheek against his arm and said in a low voice:

"And if I told you that I could never love anyone but Jack, because we've loved each other so long—ever since we were tiny children—and that I'd rather be his wife, however poor he was, than marry the richest man in the world, wouldn't it make any difference, papa?"

"Tut, tut!" said old Gunson. "Where's the sense in talking like that, you silly child? I'm not a Bluebeard or a Pasha. I'm not going to chop your head off, or Jack's either. The whole affair's perfectly straightforward. You're an expensive little

baggage, as I know from experience, and it's absolutely essential, for your own happiness, that you should marry a rich man. You'd ruin a poor man in a week. You shan't get my money till I die; and I mean to live a good while yet, I can assure you. So if Jack becomes a pauper, you can't, and you shan't, marry him. If he succeeds—and the chances are a thousand to one that he won't—well, I've said I shan't oppose your engagement any longer, and I'll keep my word. I've always liked Jack from a boy, and I've always thought that his uncle's property and mine joined together would make one of the finest estates in the county."

The old gentleman put his thumbs through the armholes of his waistcoat, and beamed on us with a gentle and benevolent smile. He was not in the least angry, the affair was too trifling for that. He regarded us with the tender half-pitying gaze with which he might have looked at a couple of babies in knickerbockers and short frocks, who wanted to get married and live in a doll's house. I don't know that his view of the situation was far wrong. Polly was eighteen and I was twenty-one and a half, and our knowledge of the world was principally gained from novels, and school and college experiences. Our paths had hitherto been strewn with roses, and so we had all the lofty contempt for money, which sometimes animates the souls of idealistic young people who know nothing of the struggle for existence or the dreariness of poverty.

When her father finished speaking, Polly rose without a word, and standing beside me, looked dreamily out of the window at the gathering shadows of the twilight.

"I think," remarked old Gunson presently, "I think Jack had better be going now. I expect Wylie, your mortgagee here this evening, Jack, and I don't want any scenes. In fact, I saw him walking up the drive a moment ago, so there's no time to lose. You'd better go out the back way, my boy."

I went. It required a considerable amount of self-control to do so. I should have liked to remain, and calmly but firmly deprive Wylie of existence; and my thoughts towards the venerable parent of my beloved one were not full of the charity that thinketh no evil. For Wylie, the mortgagee of my property was also my rival, and, as far as Mr. Gunson was concerned, a favoured rival. I knew too well that the chief ambition of that mercenary old

gentleman was to join the two properties, his own, and that which I had inherited, in one; and he evidently believed, and with reason, that Wylie's chance of becoming the ultimate possessor of "The Willow," was considerably greater than mine. Early left an orphan, I had been adopted by a bachelor uncle, who had brought me up as though I was the heir to a dukedom, and, dying, had bequeathed me an estate so hopelessly involved, that it was practically worth nothing to me. He was an easy, careless man who moved in high society, and spent his money with reckless profusion. There was not even sufficient to pay the interest of the mortgage, and that very evening I had been obliged to inform Mr. Gunson that, unless I could raise the sum of ten thousand pounds within twelve months, the estate would pass into the hands of Fred Wylie, my rival and mortgagee. Polly and I had loved each other since childhood, but her father would never consent to our engagement until, as he expressed it, he saw how "Old Dalton," my deceased uncle, "would cut up." Since my uncle's death had disclosed the disastrous condition of his affairs, I knew that Mr. Gunson had regarded Wylie's attentions to Polly with more and more friendly eyes.

Polly followed me into the hall to say good-bye, for Mr. Gunson had decreed that I should not see her again until the twelve months had expired. She walked with me through the conservatory in silence, until we came to a door which opened on to the back garden. Then she took off a little blue silk neckerchief and tied it round my arm, a pitiful smile hovering upon her trembling lips.

"Now," she said softly, "you are my knight, my brave Sir Galahad; and you are going out to fight the dragon, the great cruel world, with your lady's token on your arm. Oh, Jack, I think my heart will break. I can't bear it. I can't bear it!"

"Why, little one," I said, kissing her tearful eyes, "you mustn't send me away with such a sorrowful face as that. I can't fight bravely if I think you are sad and desponding. You must be hopeful, dear. Why, before a year's out, I shall be back again, never fear, and little Polly and The Willows shall both be mine in spite of all the Wylies in the world."

"Yes, yes, Jack, I know you will do your best, but——"

It was long before I could tear myself away, and, when at length I left her, she called me back.

"I only wanted to say, Jack," she said, trying to smile and toying with the flower in my coat, "that suppose—a year's such a long, long time, you know—that suppose we should never see each other again, I don't want you to think hardly of me."

"Polly!"

"Yes; you know I've often been peevish and irritable; but I didn't mean to be, and the love deep down in my heart was always the same, Jack."

"You dear little goose," I exclaimed, "what nonsense you're talking!"

"No, no; it isn't nonsense, Jack! but I knew you'll forgive me. Hush! I hear papa calling. Good-bye, Jack, good-bye."

She turned and left me, and yet as I looked back on my way out I could see that she was still lingering at the door of the conservatory to wave me a last farewell. Even now I can hardly keep the tears from my eyes when I think of it.

Ten thousand pounds in a year! Is there any talisman known to the human race by which so remarkable a feat can be accomplished? I do not mean, of course, by the lucky few—the leading merchants, barristers, artists, or landowners; but by such untrained and impesunious individuals as myself. Men of boundless resources, with a profound knowledge of the world and of the most direct means of acquiring wealth, often toil with ceaseless energy for many a weary year without achieving what I, an ignorant boy, hoped to accomplish in the course of a few months. The vast majority of mankind think themselves lucky if they earn enough to live comfortably upon from day to day. What hope, what slenderest chance, existed that I should prove so immeasurably more fortunate than they! Only my utter ignorance of the world prevented me from abandoning so hopeless an undertaking. As it was, I set about my task with a vigour and light-heartedness that were really astonishing under the circumstances. A very little consideration showed even me that it was impossible to accomplish my purpose through the ordinary channels of trade; and the attempts I thereupon made to diverge from the beaten paths to opulence, were a sufficient proof of my refreshing innocence of the world and all its ways.

I tried literature first. I wrote a number of stories and articles, and forwarded them to the leading periodicals. One after another they were returned, with those polite little notes which kindly editors have devised to soothe the feelings of literary aspirants.

Foiled in this direction I unearthed a novel which I had written at odd times during the previous year. As a last chance I polished it up, proceeded to London, and called at the chambers of a literary man to whom I had secured an introduction.

I found him in dressing-gown and slippers, smoking a cigar, and perusing a dilapidated volume of ancient literature. He suppressed a shudder with great fortitude when I produced my MS., but I thought his eyes twinkled when I dilated upon my hopes and ambitions.

"Of course," I explained, "I don't suppose there is any chance of raising the whole sum in this way. I can hardly expect to be so lucky as that."

"Well," he remarked drily, "I should say that would be, perhaps, a little too much to expect."

His manner was scarcely encouraging; but eventually I left the MS. with him, and agreed to call again in the course of two or three days. Those intervening days were about the longest I ever spent.

When the appointed time arrived I found him glancing over my MS.

"I understand," he said, "that you have no intention of eventually adopting a literary career."

"Well, no, I think not."

"Exactly so. That was my impression. Now, to speak candidly, if you had really set your heart on becoming a novelist, I should have advised you to take your MS. home again and re-write the whole of it."

"The whole of it?"

"Yes, my dear sir, from beginning to end. You may take my word for it, that in its present condition you might as well throw it into the Thames as offer it to a publisher. In addition to this advice, I should have given you the benefit of a long and somewhat varied experience, in the shape of any suggestions that might have occurred to me."

"But it would take me months to re-write it."

"No doubt of it. And even when you had done so, being as yet entirely unknown to the public, you would find great difficulty in securing a publisher, and common sense must show you that any sum paid to an untried writer could be little more than nominal. In short, my dear fellow, if you really meant business, I should be the last person to discourage you; but, as it is, let me strongly recommend you not to waste your time, and expose yourself to useless disappointment.

I haven't the least idea how you will be able to accomplish the task you have undertaken, but believe me there isn't the slightest chance of your performing it by the aid of this—you'll excuse the expression—rather elementary production."

Greenhorn as I was, I saw that his advice was sound, and told him, though I daresay somewhat ruefully, that I should follow it.

"Good-bye, Mr. Drysdale," he said, as I took my leave, "I wish you all possible success. And, by-the-way, if you discover any means of making ten thousand pounds in twelve months, I shall be delighted if you'll let me into the secret."

I had a few hundreds of ready money to dispose of, so I tried a little speculation on the Stock Exchange. I had a friend—Smith by name, something or other in the City, I don't know exactly what—who dabbled in that sort of thing, and I immediately went to consult him. His eyes lighted up with pleasure, and he patted me enthusiastically on the back.

"We'll do it, my boy!" he exclaimed, "we'll do it. I've got about the best thing on I ever had in my life. We'll go in for Egyptians. The public's an ass, you know; and the public thinks that Arabi Pasha's going to make a rumpus in Egypt; consequently Egyptians are coming down with a run. But it's all gammon, my boy. I know better. In another week Egyptians will be higher than ever, and you'll literally coin money, just coin it. We'll go in for Egyptians, my dear fellow. Just buy 'em wholesale."

We did, and before a week had passed I was glad to get rid of them for anything they would bring. There has been a slight estrangement between Smith and me since then, for I felt that he had acted imprudently.

Then I turned my attention to the stage. I was not so hopelessly ignorant as to be very sanguine about the result; but my imagination was fired by the career of various theatrical stars, and I knew little of the struggles and training which had preceded and ensured success. I was slightly acquainted with the manager of one of the London theatres, and ventured to call upon him.

"You wish to adopt the stage as a profession?" he asked.

"Yea."

"Have you had any experience?"

"Not exactly on the stage; but I've frequently taken part in private theatricals."

"Hum! Well, my dear fellow, unless you've a special gift and unlimited enthusiasm, I strongly advise you to choose some other career. You'll find it slow, laborious, uphill work. You'll probably have to begin at the foot of the ladder, and it may be years before you get a chance of playing a leading character."

I opened my heart to him and explained the situation in which I was placed. He was a kindly enough man, and tried hard to keep a straight face, but I could see he found it well-nigh impossible to take me seriously; and I left him, after half-an-hour's conversation, with a vivid impression that the stage did not present that avenue to wealth which I had previously imagined.

And now I naturally began to feel somewhat discouraged. Here I was at the end of my resources, and the ten thousand pounds as far off as ever; indeed, further off, for those detestable "Egyptians" had already swallowed up a considerable amount of my capital. I had serious thoughts of trying my luck on the race-course, or at the gambling-table, and was only held back by the fear of losing the little money I still possessed. At length, however, a ray of light flashed through the gloom. One morning, as I glanced at the newspaper, the following paragraph caught my eye:

"STRIKING OIL.

"It is reported that a new oil district, known as Stonewall Ridge, has recently been discovered in the neighbourhood of Oil City, Pennsylvania. Great importance is attached to the discovery, and it is believed that the fortunate owners of the new wells are likely to realise immense fortunes."

Eureka! I had found it! My mind was made up in a moment. I would go to Pennsylvania and strike oil. Gathering together almost every shilling I possessed in the world, I booked my passage, and in less than a week was afloat on the Atlantic.

I wrote to Polly and Mr. Gunson telling them of my project. Polly sent me a loving, hopeful letter. Old Gunson added a postscript.

"I have all along considered your plans rash and ill advised, but this latest scheme could only have originated in the brain of a lunatic."

Polly had crossed out the word "lunatic" and written "genius" above it. It cheered me to think that she at least had still faith in me in spite of my previous failures.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 954. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VI. SUNSET ON THE PINCIO.

It was midnight now.

The sun shone hot and bright over the crimson clover fields, and a hundred pretty pictures showed themselves to Gretchen's watchful eyes as they gazed out untiringly over the fair green country. A knot of peasants at work; a group of children, brown-faced and dark-eyed; the white walls and houses of scattered villages that looked like toys set down amidst the grandeur of the wide-spread hills; a flock of goats feeding, tended by some youthful peasant; the dusky ruin of some ancient castle, with the moss and lichen of ages fringing and covering its brown walls and broken turrets; the gleam of sun-burnished water; the chance glimpse of some dark verdant nook, such as Faun or Dryad might once have loved to haunt; and here and there, crossing and re-crossing each other in endless succession, the pale green ropes of the vines, stretched from bough to bough of the short and tufted trees; and around and about all these pictures, the framework of the purple mountains, that, like protecting arms, held the whole wide country in their soft embrace.

The little party were very silent. Kenyon had fallen asleep; Adrian Lyle, seated opposite to Gretchen, was absorbed, like herself, in watching the changing scenes. They were new to him as to her, though he saw them with maturer vision and less fervour and excitement of feeling.

He was thinking how the one dream of his life had been to visit the Eternal City,

and yet, now that he was about to realise that dream, not one emotion, such as he had anticipated, thrilled his heart; rather, a weight and a dread lay upon it, and he found himself dimly wondering whether a day might not come when he should regret this realisation more deeply than ever he had longed for it.

"Was the sea really here—once?" asked Gretchen, as they sped across the vast Campagna. "It seems scarcely possible to believe it."

Adrian Lyle raised himself with a start.

"The sea—yes; undoubtedly. They say that its present state is due to powerful volcanic agency. You can see that red tufa everywhere, besides innumerable ancient craters. The whole of this vast space was once full of populous towns. Now it is given over to herdsmen and shepherds, and even by them is shunned and dreaded half the year on account of malaria."

"That is the fever one hears so much of," said Gretchen. "They told us at Venice that it was too late for Rome. We should be sure to get the fever."

Adrian Lyle laughed.

"That is a regular hotel trick," he said. "They never like to 'speed a parting guest.' There is always something to warn you of, or frighten you about."

"What hotel are you going to?" enquired Gretchen presently, "or will you come to ours?"

"Yours?" he said, and his grey eyes met her frank gaze with a sudden vivid flash. "Where do you go then?"

"Hotel Europa, in the Piazza di Spagna," she answered. "Neale says they will be sure to speak English or German there. He doesn't know any Italian. You may just as well come too," she went on persuasively. "If we do our sight-seeing

together, you will be close at hand when wanted."

"But perhaps," he said quietly, "you would rather do your sight-seeing with your husband. Three are no company, the proverb says."

"But you make such a good third," she said innocently, "and you tell me everything so clearly and distinctly. Now Neale has always to read it off the guide-book."

"Ah!" said the young clergyman a little bitterly, "every man has his use. I am glad to find mine. I have often wondered whether indeed I had any."

"You?" exclaimed Gretchen, and looked at him with such a world of admiration and amazement, as almost startled him. "Now, Mr. Lyle, why do you speak like that? It cannot be that you mean it. Have you not told me of the great and glorious mission of your Church and Order—that this world is only the threshold of your office. Ah!" she went on hurriedly, "if I had learnt religion as you teach it—if I had known its beauty as you know it, I might—I might——"

"You might—what?" he asked eagerly, as he saw her lips pale, even while they checked the eager speech which seemed to threaten some dangerous revelation.

"Why should I not tell you?" she went on hurriedly. "You know I am of another faith to yours, but your God is also mine. It had been agreed that I should devote my life only to that service. I was to know nothing of the world. Indeed, I did know nothing. Ever before my eyes was held that mystic and exalted divinity, to whom my soul had been led—my youth, and all its coming years, consecrated. Freedom—joy—love; these were things I only knew by some instinct of sympathy—they never came into my life in this time of which we speak."

"And then?" asked Adrian Lyle, almost harshly.

"Then," she said, and a beautiful light and glow came over her face, and her eyes turned to the sleeper by her side, "then I met—him. After that it was one long rebellion against this decree. I could not give myself to Heaven as I had been told I must give myself. I could not shut my soul into the cold silence of a living grave. I longed for freedom, for happiness, for what was due to my youth. I prayed, I entreated, I wept. I asked Heaven for release, but Heaven did not heed; and then—then, in utter desperation, I broke my bonds, and cast aside my fetters, for

love gave me strength, and led me to him. Oh, Mr. Lyle," she went on passionately, "often I have wondered if I did wrong; if being bound to Heaven's service, I should have sacrificed all earthly joys and affection at its shrine—but Nature was too strong for me. I had been passive, I had been content; but then I had not known what it was to love. For love's sake I broke the chain that was to bind me to Heaven. Will Heaven ever forgive me, do you think?"

Looking at the clasped hands, the passionate eyes, the sweet, trembling lips, it seemed to Adrian Lyle as if Heaven could scarcely be harsh to so lovely a sinner; but he did not say so.

His face had grown grave, almost stern:

"Had you entered the convent?" he asked abruptly.

"No; but they were to send me there the next day. And then I knew I could never, never escape, and the Sister who was to have charge of me was a stern and cruel woman, and I feared her. And Neale prayed me to come to him, and Lischen said she would help me—but that, aunt and grandfather must never know; and I promised her—and at dead of night I stole away, and——"

"Hush!" cried Adrian Lyle roughly, almost rudely, "don't tell me any more. I—I can guess the rest," he went on abruptly: "it doesn't need words. You must have been in desperate case, poor child! I can't find it in my heart to blame you, but Heaven grant you may never regret the exchange you have made!"

"Have I been very wrong?" she asked humbly. "Do you think I shall ever be forgiven?"

Again that old cruel doubt gnawed at the heart-strings of Adrian Lyle; again something seemed to urge him to ask the one question that should confute that doubt, or—aye! that was the rub—substantiate it. The dread, the fear, the daily growing certainty—these might be set at rest; but at what a cost! He turned his eyes from the pleading face to the arid plain before him.

"Right—wrong—what are they at best but quibbles of men's minds," he muttered impatiently. "The law of Nature tells us that what is right is to our advantage, and that what is wrong entails adequate punishment. I can't say I think you were wrong—but then in appealing to me, you appeal to the doctrines of a faith widely differ-

eat from your own. We have no monasteries and convents for the devotees of our religion—save some self-founded institutions or retreats for the ultra-zealous, or the ascetic ritualist. To me, it has always seemed that it is an insult to the Creator, to shut away the life he has given, in the solitude of a cell, in the unutterable dreariness and loneliness of so-called religious penance.

No—I say again, if your heart and soul rebelled against the tyranny of your Church, it was better to shun religious martyrdom. Of course,” and his bright eyes looked smilingly at her, “of course it stands to reason that I have little sympathy with these doctrines of ascetics. If anyone gives you a handsome or valuable gift and you deliberately destroy that gift before his eyes, do you suppose he would be pleased or gratified by such a reception? Well—life is a precious possession—it is meant to be used, not abused; to shed joy, comfort, and beauty around its individual sphere, not be offered as a sacrifice on some shrine of false humility or perverted belief.”

“Oh,” she cried eagerly, “how beautifully you express it, how happy you make me!”

The look and words touched Adrian Lyle deeply. Their eager and passionate vitality fell across the too vivid consciousness of his own feelings, as sunshine and shadow fall over a landscape. But they cast his thoughts into a momentary whirl of passionate confusion, that set his nature into one fierce conflict of pain, and sorrow, and desire; yet having so set them, they were looked back by his iron will into those strong and secret chambers of his heart, from whence issued all the enemies with which he wrestled in his hours of solitude, in his nights of prayer.

Suddenly he withdrew his gaze; his face grew chill, as if a mask of stone had covered the mobile features.

“Do not thank me,” he said coldly. “I am but a man, and perhaps a man less clear of judgement or intelligence than those of your priesthood from whom you learnt the duties of Christianity. They told you one thing; I tell you another. Creeds, doctrines, dogmas, faiths—the world is full of them. And what have they done for it, save plunge it into rivers of blood? Do you know?”—and a little bitter laugh escaped his lips—“I once heard a poor, uneducated man say, ‘Men have a many creeds to teach, but there is only one Heaven.’ There is philosophy for you.”

“Are you two at your creeds and doc-

trines again?” murmured Kenyon, yawning and stretching himself lazily. “Do shut up, there’s good people. Surely we’re at the end of that confounded Campagna by this time! Why, we’re due at Rome at four.”

“It is a quarter to four,” said Adrian Lyle, looking at his watch. “You’ve slept for nearly two hours, Kenyon.”

“It will rest my eyes for the Pincio,” said the young fellow, unfastening his bandage, and turning those weak but very loving orbs to Gretchen. “Why, child, how grave you look! Has Mr. Lyle been reading you a sermon? If you will persuade her to have nothing more to do with priests, Lyle, I shall be thankful, especially now. Heaven knows what domestic secrets they won’t worm out of her, or what insubordination they won’t counsel!”

“Indeed,” said Gretchen eagerly, as she looked with all her heart’s adoration at the young, handsome, laughing face. “Indeed, Neale, it shall be to me as you wish. I will forswear even my faith for you.”

“Mr. Lyle, I congratulate you on your convert,” said Neale Kenyon, looking a little embarrassed at the serious turn of the conversation. “Certainly though, she has nothing to thank her priests for, she would have been shut up hard and fast in a convent by this time had she listened to them; and now——”

“Now,” said Adrian Lyle coldly and gravely, “she will only listen to you. Take care what you teach her, Kenyon. The soil is fruitful and innocent enough, but the seed to be planted there—that is a different matter.”

“Ah, here comes Bari!” exclaimed Kenyon, joyfully. “That means Rome at last. A truce to sermons, my dear fellow. We’ll go up to the Pincio as soon as we’ve washed off the dust of travel, and watch the sun setting over St. Peter’s. That’s better than any sermon. Let’s hope we shall have the place to ourselves too. Most of the swells leave after Easter. Bari, you telegraphed for rooms, I suppose?”

“Yes, Monsieur,” answered the discreet valet.

“Mr. Lyle is coming to the Europa also,” said Gretchen, eagerly.

“That’s all right,” answered Kenyon. “It will save hunting him up whenever we want his company.”

Bari had given a quick glance at the young clergyman.

“But they are fools, these English hus-

bands," so ran his thoughts. "Does he think that no eyes but his own will tell Madame she is beautiful, or that a cassock does not warm beneath the beat of the human heart its veils? Ah, there is no love lost between Monsieur le prêtre and me! I know that well enough; but let him look to himself! my eyes are the sharpest, my ears the longest. Let Monsieur le prêtre look to himself!"

An hour later and the three travellers were driving up the winding slope towards the "Hill of Gardens," in Rome. Crowds of people were wending their way from the square below, with its great sphinxes, and fountains, and drooping trees; others were climbing the steep stairway that led to the terrace. A band was playing amongst the trees; bells were chiming in discordant rhythm; the soft spring air was alive with many voices chattering, and laughing, and screaming in the voluble and excitable fashion of Italians. Above all, the sky glowed warm, and rosy, and beautiful, as the sun's last rays lingered over the broken line of the hills, and lit with flame the great cross that crowns the dome of St. Peter's.

At the summit of the hill they left the carriage, and walked over the terrace and past the cactus and aloe trees, and the gay little kiosques, and on till they reached the stone balustrade where the idlers had gathered to chatter, and laugh, and gossip over a scene that was no longer new, on ground that had ceased to be sacred. But it was both new and sacred to Adrian Lyle. He stood motionless as a statue; his eyes swept, with one rapid wondering glance, over the magnificent panorama. The huge pile of St. Peter's and the Vatican; the great hills dark with cypress trees; the yellow waters of the Tiber; the round castle of St. Angelo, with the sun-rays glittering on its bronze angel; the pine groves of the Villa Doria; the whole vast labyrinth of roofs, spires, cupolas, towers and gardens, ruins and palaces, plains and marshes—all, in fact, that is Rome—stretched vast and silent before him, and struck him dumb for very wonder and very awe.

He forgot all else; he even forgot his companions. For the time being he was absorbed in that contemplation which seemed to fill his mind with a weight of ponderous memories, and turn all things of life, all hopes of past and future, into the visionary fragments of a dream.

"They are right to call it sacred ground," he thought reverently, his eyes turning to the red and rayless sun, where burned above the dome raised to Nero's restless soul—"sacred indeed is it, and haunted by the greatest deeds of men, the grandest gifts of Heaven. They lie who call Rome dreary and commonplace. Commonplace!—while yet the bronze Aurelius stands upon the Capitoline Hill, and the Arch of Constantine broods in glorious isolation beside the Rostra of Cæsar. Commonplace! the Mother of the World, where men's deeds live in a thousand memorials of greatness, and the very shadows of decay have a beauty that exceeds all modern art! Commonplace——"

"My dear Lyle," broke in Kenyon's voice at this moment, "hasn't your brown study lasted long enough? I asked you if you didn't feel how chilly the air gets the moment the sun goes down."

Adrian Lyle started as if he had been awakened from sleep. It was quite true; the sun had sunk behind the horizon; the shadows had grown long; the terrace was almost deserted; and a faint chill wind swept over the hill and stirred the drooping boughs.

He looked at Gretchen. Her face was very pale. Her eyes, dark and absorbed, rested on that far-off purple line of the Alban Mountains, where so lately all the rose and gold of the flaming sky had spread its glory.

"And this is—Rome!" she said with a deep sigh, and then turned, as if for sympathy, to the figure beside her.

Her eyes met those of Adrian Lyle. Kenyon had strolled on, a little impatient at the absorption and silence of his companions.

She looked after him—her lips trembled a little. "He does not care," she said sorrowfully. "But then it is not new to him as it is to me. I feel as if—as if—"

"I know," said Adrian Lyle, quietly. "You forget it is also new to me."

"One cannot speak of what it is—you feel as I do, do you not?"

"Yes," he answered in the same dreamy, quiet way. "But do not speak of it. There are some feelings one cannot put into words."

Again she looked at him—long, earnestly as a child might look. Then suddenly her eyes drooped; a little shiver shook her frame. "Let us go," she said hurriedly. "Neale was right. It is very cold when once the sun has set."

PANICS.

WHEN the world was young, in the days when Nature was still a mystery, and science but a vague yearning after its beauty, it would tell itself fairy tales, to explain those things which it dimly felt, yet was not wise enough to understand. To-day, it has grown old, and it has put from it such childish things. To-day, it is very wise, and looks with half-sad, half-scornful eyes, upon that foolish, laughing, unknowing childhood. To-day, it cannot laugh with the old joyous laughter, for it has learned to analyse even the expression of mirth. It defines it as the convulsion of the diaphragm, or something equally explanatory, and the spark of careless merriment dies in the atmosphere of such self-conscious wisdom. It cannot even weep so pitifully over its sorrows, for it has studied political economy with such effect, that in poverty it only sees the consequences of folly and want of forethought, and in sickness a wilful disregard of sanitary laws; while death—well, death still troubles it. But it has advanced a theory even upon that unfathomable subject, which suggests that there is no need for a man to die at all, if only he follows out all the moral and sanitary laws evolved for his benefit from the experience of ages, and does not get killed by any untoward circumstances. But there is, unfortunately, a grim irony in these untoward circumstances. No matter how smoothly a man's life sweeps on in obedience to these great laws, like the noiseless whirl of some perfectly oiled machinery, he is liable at every second of his existence, to be suddenly jarred and stopped by one of these untoward accidents. The great band snaps like a thread; dust gets in, in spite of constant watching; a piston refuses to act; and the great fly-wheel shivers into fragments like a fallen crystal goblet; and the man dies, in spite of himself.

Perhaps the day may still come when the perfections of life will be such that he will not die; but it seems a very long way off.

In the meantime, the great god Pan is dead. He died down by the reeds of the river, when the world passed from childhood to manhood. The world did not care to listen to his stories any longer. It began to criticise them; to mock at their absurdities; to show up in contemptuous pity, their blind gropings after truths which it could see so well itself, in the daylight of

manhood. So it took its bow of wisdom and slew old Pan, and went on its way rejoicing that it was a foolish, ignorant child no longer. And yet it is strange, for all its vaunted light and knowledge, that it cannot quite throw off the spell of the shepherd god. In the midst of its ultra cultivation and complete civilisation, there is a vague yearning after the simplicity of the old earth-life, where each man reaped what he sowed, and was satisfied. And the King of the Pipe of Seven Reeds seems to avenge his dethronement by haunting still the soul of this wise new world, as if to show that it is yet very far from being the perfectly reasonable, highly consistent machine it fancies itself.

In the old days it was said of Pan, that "he had power also to strike men with terrors, and those especially vain and superstitious, which are termed panic fears." And who shall be positive enough to deny that even in this wise, sceptical age, this spirit-breath of the old god still plays upon the world, making it afraid, where all its reason and education teach it that there is no fear, if only it will stand still and not run away? It is curious how these panics still stir the world. But that their ending is often so tragic, they might excite laughter, so foolish and unreasoning they are.

But these wild scares have brought about revolutions which have overturned governments; have lost whole armies; have slain the righteous; have trodden human lives down into the depths of despair, and cruelty, and hate.

Perhaps the most pathetic part of the panic is its needlessness—the most terrible, its contagion; for the strongest and wisest are often carried away by it, and the rule of childishness and ignorance is uppermost once more. A ghastly satire upon the spirit of order and wisdom, and political economy, which vaunts itself, as being of the world to-day. There is something humiliating to this proud humanity which peoples the earth, in the strange scares that fall on it when its passions are forced out of the dead level of cultivated conventionality. A philosopher who teaches that life is a breath of no particular consequence to its breather, because when it passes from him, it will be absorbed in the one great breath necessary to the general benefit of the species, will rise and scramble over seats and barriers in a burning theatre, as wildly and desperately as the maddened unphilosophical crowd, fighting and struggling.

and screaming, with the fire-panic upon it. Reason is powerless to teach its units that if they would but master that terror and go quietly, each one would be saved, and that this frantic effort to escape means death.

And the philosopher is no better. He may despise life, but the spirit of Pan—the great god Nature, which has bred in mankind that kind of care which tends “to the preservation of its own life and being”—is upon him, and he runs; and runs so wildly, that in his panting sobs, there seems a faint echo of the old god’s mocking laughter, as it derides the philosopher for being only a man after all, who, so far as he will, cannot fling off the earth-life which makes him and his soul a two-fold mystery.

Each age, nay, each century of the world, has had its scares. They have been tragic, and pitiful, and even comic; and each country has had its own particular ones. The Spanish Armada, the invention of machinery, Papacy, the French, loomed like bogey shadows over the past of England. To-day, Protection, Russia, Banks, Commerce, Coal, the Lord Mayor’s Show, and the Socialists, can still spread a panic in its reasonable, educated, free-thinking spirit.

Sometimes, to-day, it is a gold panic which stirs the world, and brings about, by its mad haste, the very catastrophe it dreads.

Sometimes, in the past, it would be a scare of conscience, in which such cruelties and injustices were done, that the conscience would be weighted with the crimes its zeal had prompted.

Sometimes it was a scare of pestilence, which spread the disease far and wide, and killed thousands where, but for that ungovernable fear, there would have been hundreds. The Black Death which in the fourteenth century desolated the world, was one of the most terrible examples of this latter form of panic. The Flagellants, the fanatical product of that physical and spiritual fear, spread the contagion far and wide as they wandered through Europe with their black garments and red cross on the forehead. All ties—moral, social, family—were rent asunder. The world had gone mad with a cruel, unreasoning terror, in which men seemed like brute beasts, raving wildly, yet with a kind of despairing horror, at a visitation they felt to be supernatural. The poison-panic against the Jews which accompanied this plague-panic, was a type of this utter demoralisation of social life, and the Jews

were immolated by thousands—human sacrifices to human dread.

One of the most popular panics common to all countries and centuries, has been that of the immediate end of the world. In most great crises of the world’s history this scare has sprung into life, and the world has rushed through the streets; flung off its jewels; confessed its sins; or plunged deeper into vice, growing reckless and impious in a blasphemy of terror. The scare ends, and the devout pick up their jewels; and the reckless feel that they have forged themselves a few heavier chains; and the world, finding its end still not yet, goes on soberly once more, marrying, and attending its money markets, as if they were the sole aim and end of the creation of the universe. Tidal waves and earthquakes which are to bring swift destruction upon some town or hill, have been the fruitful cause of many local scares. It is said that the people of Jersey left their houses and took lodgings at a little higher elevation on one occasion, when a tidal wave, long prophesied, was declared to be at last at the moment of rising.

And as with peoples, so it is with individuals. Where is the man or woman who has not at some period of existence felt that strange, undefinable fear which falls upon the soul when the outer realities of every-day life are swept from it like chaff before a mighty wind, and it feels itself alone? The mighty wind may be death; or the sudden discovery that youth and strength have vanished; or the shadow of a great sin, which makes the flutter of a leaf as it falls to the ground, like an avenging footstep; or the loss of friends and fortune. It is then that the calm teaching of Reason fails; that cynic Scepticism dies out of the heart; that conventionalities—nay, that friendship—can comfort no more. Pan blows on his pipes, and the note thrills the heart with a sense of mystery and pain; and men and women grow frightened with this strange panic, feeling that after all they are but children playing in the loneliness and the dark.

THE FRIENDS AND THEIR FOES.

IN 1656 the Massachusetts Government passed a law for “the banishment of that cursed set of heretics lately risen up in the world, commonly called Quakers.” What would have happened if England had been

appealed to is uncertain. Cromwell had yielded to the remonstrances of several leading Quakers, and had tried to stop the persecution to which, even under the Commonwealth, the sect had been subjected. But it was a far cry to England; and so these Pilgrim Fathers, who had gone across the Atlantic to avoid Laud's meddling with what they called their consciences, had it all their own way; and they certainly did not do what Mrs. Hemans says they did, viz.,

Keep unstained what there they found,
Freedom to worship God.

At home, during the same time, the Quakers were not free from persecution, though Cromwell, to whom several of them wrote, "declaring the message of the Lord to Oliver, then called Lord Protector," passed several edicts on their behalf. The stolid bigotry of Justices, and the ill-feeling of the mob, often worked directly against the tolerant edicts of the Protector. As for the people, they seem often to have transferred to the Quakers the hatred they had been used to show to witches.

The unpleasant way the Quakers had of seeing special judgements in the misfortunes of those who molested them had, doubtless, something to do with this. When the excellent John Banks, being much troubled by an informer, who would interrupt his preaching, and take down the names of those present at the meeting, cried out, as he was walking away: "Friends and people, mark and take notice of the end of that wicked man;" and when, not long after, the said informer was hanged for killing his wife, the people would not unaturally remember Banks's prophecy, and perhaps interpret it as an imprecation.

When the Irish judge, who had put Barbara Blaugdon, of Bristol, into a filthy Dublin prison, died the same night that she was let free, having previously told his friends he was afraid of his life, so solemnly had she assured him that the day of his death was at hand, no wonder that believers in the Evil Eye should have thought that Barbara had "overlooked" him, and had so caused the doom which she foretold.

As for the Justices, what was a country Justice of the Peace to do when a Quakeress was brought before him for blasphemously denying the existence of God, and all the explanation she would give was: "Yea, verily, I used unto them the words of the Lord by Jeremiah: 'Though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely.'" How could he draw distinctions between what she had quoted from the prophet and

what she said out of her own head? She had made a disturbance, and the law then was not so tolerant of disturbances as it is in these days of Salvation Armies; and as she refused (they always did on principle) to find sureties for good behaviour, she would naturally be sent to prison. The hardship was in the sort of prison and the length of imprisonment.

Anne Camm, for instance, of the Camms of Cammagill, a Westmoreland lady (many of them came from the Lake Country), wife of another Westmoreland Quaker, John Andland, was thrust at Banbury into an underground hole through which ran the common sewer, and kept there eight months, including the bitter winter of 1653, all because of the frivolous charge above stated. Cold and damp were less dangerous than gaol fever, for Anne survived her incarceration—lived on, indeed, till 1705—and, strangely enough, though she was always an active preacher, was never once molested all through the persecuting times of Charles the Second.

Elizabeth Stirredge's case, too, is a case in point. She was a most loveable woman, daughter of a Gloucestershire Puritan, who had brought her up in the belief that "there's a day coming wherein Truth will more gloriously break forth than ever since the Apostles' days. I shall not live to see it; but you, child, may." And she thought she saw it when William Dewsbury, the Yorkshire shepherd boy, reminded her, in her despondency, that "more blessed are they that believe and see not;" and when another Friend said: "Dear child, thou wilt make an honourable woman for the Lord; for He will honour thee with His blessed testimony." This was shortly before the Restoration, which many Friends hoped would bring them a respite. Unhappily, in some places, matters got even worse, the treatment of the Quakers depending, as before, on the temper of the mob and the wisdom or unwisdom of the local Justices.

Field and Sewel in their "History," and Besse, in his "Sufferings of Friends," give ten thousand as the number imprisoned during the Commonwealth in the British Islands and in America, and thirteen thousand in England only from the Restoration until 1697. Of these three hundred and eighty-eight are said to have died in gaol, or at the hands of the executioner. Let us hope this is exaggerated, though Miss Budge, the latest authority, accepts these numbers

as authentic. Anyhow, there can be no question of the cruelties; to be kept long in prison, was in those days (when even Judges used now and then to die of gaol fever) almost like a sentence of death.

Humphry Smith, for instance, was undoubtedly done to death, though the process was a long one. At Evesham, in 1655, under the rule of Cromwell's "Saints," the Mayor being determined to break up the Quaker community, Smith and two others were thrust into a filthy dungeon, His Worship refusing Smith's request that it might be cleansed. The bedding that their friends had provided was confiscated, even to the pillow which one of them, suffering from toothache, begged to be allowed to keep. The room was twelve feet square, with a four-inch-wide hole to admit light, and air, and food. So grievous was the stench from this hole that Friends in the street could scarcely stand and talk with the prisoners. The Judge's threat, in committing them, had been: "You've been kept very high all this while; but I shall take a course ere I go hence that you shall be kept shorter." After such language from the Bench, no wonder the gaoler should taunt them, when he was taking away their bedding. "If you were thieves or murderers," said he, "I could give you more liberty; but such as you'll get no benefit from the law, and no lawyer will dare to plead for you."

Cromwell's Vagrants Act was a strict one. Under it an ill-disposed magistrate might lay hands on those who went about at their own cost preaching; they were "absent from home, not employed for any merchant, and could give no satisfactory account of their business." Smith thinks the Justices were much more to blame than "the untaught people," though these at Evesham threw hot water over him and his friends, and pelted them with big stones. Certainly the Mayor must have been grossly in fault when the gaoler could venture to entrap two teamsters from the country who, passing with their horses, stopped to ask why the Friends were in prison. "Step in and you'll see," said this precious limb of the law. And when he got them inside, he would not unlock the door till they had paid their footing with all the money they had about them.

At Axminster, next year, Smith suffered in the same way; and the year after, at Winchester, he was put into what he calls "a filthy prison, and place unfit for men." He had first been whipped, his money being taken from him,

and his books and papers burnt before his eyes. This Winchester gaol received him again in 1661, on the "mittimus" of Judge Terril, "as a ringleader and one of the chief of the Quakers." Smith protested strongly against the glaring illegality of the committal; but the Judge would not let him go unless he promised to hold no more meetings. His companions were felons, who sometimes robbed him of his food. At the next assizes, at which he said to the Judge: "Friend, remember I have been a whole year in prison and no breach of any law proved against me," he was re-committed, some of his friends being sentenced to share his imprisonment; but the ague had taken such hold of him that "very quiet and content," he died in gaol in 1663. A gentle nature he; for, in controversy with a clergyman, who had written a violent tract against Quakers, instead of using the strong language of the time, he wrote: "I send thee a tender letter of love to thy soul. For I tell thee, man, in love, there is something yet in thee which will witness me to be true."

Humphry Smith was one of several Quakers who had a foreboding of the Great Fire. In 1662 he warned the Londoners that "the city and suburbs and all that belongeth to her shall be consumed. . . . I beheld and saw the tall buildings fall, and it consumed all the lofty therein, and she became a desolation; and the vision hereof remaineth in me as a thing that was secretly showed me of the Lord." Humphry's record is: "Haled I was, and beat out of the Synagogues; tried at the Assizes as an offender; yet there denied the liberty of a murderer. Six times was I imprisoned; twice stripped naked and beaten with rods; often abused in Prison; once put and kept long in a loathsome hole for praying," etc.

But I was speaking of Elizabeth Starredge. She was a woman of a great spirit, and had felt called to write an address to Charles the Second, and to present it in person. Long she resisted, for, brave as she was, she had a low estimate of her own gifts, and thought it was a snare of Satan that she should set her hand to what would better become a learned minister. However, "such sorrow followed this unwillingness," that at last she wrote her address, warning the King of what would surely follow from persecuting the righteous and shedding innocent blood, and straightway took it to London, fearing exceedingly lest she might not be allowed to return to her husband and children.

"Hear, O King, and fear the Lord of heaven and earth," she cried as she handed her paper.

The King (we are told) turned very pale, and, glancing at the address, said in a sad tone: "I thank you, good woman."

Shortly after, a constable and his officers came to get from her husband the fine which Quakers had to pay for attending meetings. Stirredge would not pay, saying:

"I owe the King nothing."

The constable said: "I wish you'd pay, for it's against my conscience to take your goods."

The officers, however, of less tender conscience than their leader, took some of Stirredge's goods; and Elizabeth went to the meeting at which they were appraised. She sat silent by the door, and one of the Justices wanted to have her turned out: "he could not go on with the Court's business while she sat there." Whereupon (as she describes it) "the power of the Lord fell upon me with a very dreadful warning amongst them." And when, shortly after, two of them died suddenly at a feast, what the Friends would call a special providence, would, doubtless by many, be looked upon as "the work of that uncanny woman who sat watching by the door."

No doubt the Friends were sometimes trying to flesh and blood, when that flesh and blood were embodied in a short-tempered Justice of the Peace accustomed to subservience. There was the great hat difficulty, which often brought them into trouble; and, in their determination to be too biblical, they sometimes had the bad taste to copy St. Paul before the High Priest too literally. The Apostle, doubtless, had special reasons for calling Ananias "a whited wall:" but it was unwise for Quakers to imitate him in that particular.

Then, meetings in prisons must have given offence, and preaching through gaol windows; and the refusal to take the Oath of Abjuration was often simply misunderstood. "They must be Jesuits," some dense magistrate would think; "no one else would refuse such a straightforward oath;" and, when we think how ridiculously the epithet "Jesuit" has been misapplied in our day, we cannot wonder at the mistake.

Then there were occasional quaintnesses, which certainly offended against public order. It was all very well for Fox to dress in a suit of leather of his own making; but when, at the bidding of the Spirit, men and

women now and then walked without any clothes at all through the street on a market-day, no wonder mob and magistrates were up in arms. The Quakers would alike have justified their conduct by asserting the perfectibility of human nature. To a perfect being it can make no difference whether he and those about him are clothed or unclothed; it is a mere matter of convenience.

On the whole, we cannot wonder that Judge Byfield, of New England, "thought it might be well if Friends were all settled in a place by themselves, where they would not be troublesome to others by their contradictory ways."

To which Story replied, with that mixture of earnestness and spiritual conceit which is so common and so provoking: "If you should send us out of all countries into one by ourselves, that would not ease you, for more would spring up unavoidably in our places; for what would the world do if it should lose its salt and leaven?"

That must have made the Judge stare, seeing that no doubt he believed himself and his fellow Puritans to be the salt of the earth. We are glad (though surprised) to read that "the Judge seemed astonished at this reply, yet kindly shook hands with Story when they parted."

I can understand a Justice of the Peace getting angry and taking a cruel advantage of the law; but I cannot understand the clergy keeping Quakers in prison for not paying tithe. Capt. Barber, of Diss, converted by George Whitehead, one of the Westmoreland Company, was actually kept twenty years in Norwich jail, "through the malice of an old clergyman whose tithe he scrupled to pay."

Story's boast about their ubiquitousness is justified by the history of many Friends. Not content with going through England from end to end, some went to Holland (where they were often very ill-received), often having, too, to speak through an interpreter. Thus Caton and Ames went to Amsterdam, and thence to Heidelberg. Here they met Stubbs, who, with another (for, like the monks, the Friends generally travelled in pairs), was coming back from Egypt.

Why Stubbs chose Egypt, I cannot tell; neither know I why, in 1658, Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers went to Leghorn and thence to Malta, where the Inquisition was in full force. The Governor treated them well and sent them to visit his sister in her convent. The nuns were pleased

with their little books; and, wonderful to tell, once while they were in a church during service, Katherine knelt down with her back to the high altar, and "lifted up her voice in prayer;" whereupon the priest, instead of ordering her to be taken out, put off his surplice and fell upon his knees beside her. He probably thought she was an "ecstatica," belonging to some Sisterhood; and the strength of the Roman Church has always been that it has allowed, nay, sometimes welcomed, little practical vagaries, provided the main essentials of dogma were intact. His view was shared by many in England. The anti-Quaker tracts constantly speak of the sect as Popish; the Bristol magistrates' order for arresting them, calls them "persons of the Franciscan Order of Rome"! For a time Sarah and Katherine lived at the British Consul's house; but when the Inquisitors began persuading him to give them up, they rashly told him that Pilate had tried in vain to do the Jews a pleasure and yet to wash his hands in innocence. This naturally annoyed him, and he withdrew his protection. Their chief sufferings during imprisonment were from the stifling heat. Malta is bad enough in summer for those who can seek the coolest places. What must it have been in a close room with only two small windows? Then there were the mosquitoes; and the friars, who kept annoying them to take the Sacrament, and lending them scourges of small cords, such as they themselves used till the blood ran. All this time the higher classes visited them in large numbers, and were allowed free discussion. Writing materials also were not forbidden; nay, they talked through their windows to the passers-by as they went to and from mass. The friars, however, failing to move them, insisted that they should not be let go, though after about three years, Daniel Baker spent three weeks on the island, offering first his liberty, then his life, for their release. The terms were that they should be bound in three thousand dollars never again to come to Malta; and this they refused to promise. Soon after Lathey and Fox appealed on their behalf to Lord d'Aubigny, Queen Henrietta Maria's chaplain, and by his mediation they were unconditionally set free, "taking courteous leave of the Inquisitor, and kneeling down in prayer that God would not lay their imprisonment to his charge." When they got to London, Lathey took them to d'Aubigny, who said: "Good women, for what kindness I have

done you, all that I shall desire of you is that you will remember me in your prayers."

But if the Inquisition treated Chaevers and Evans with unexpected mildness, what shall we say to the Grand Turk's behaviour to Mary Fisher? This North-County Friend began with sixteen months in York gaol. Then in Cambridge she and another Quakeress "discoursed with the young collegians at Sydney College gate;" but the mayor had them scourged with barbarous severity at the market cross. Twice again in York and once in Aylesbury she was imprisoned; and then she tried Barbadoes, the first point in the New World which the Quakers attacked. She could not rest, however, "till she should go in person to the great Emperor of Turk," Mahmoud the Fourth, then only eighteen years of age, "and inform him concerning the errors of his religion and the truth of hers." She got to Smyrna by way of Italy, Zante, Corinth; but here the British Consul, fearing she would stir up ill-feeling against resident Christians, put her unawares on a ship bound for Venice, commanding the captain to land her there. She managed, however, to get ashore in the Morea, and made her way on foot through Greece and over the Thracian mountains to Adrianople, close to which Mahmoud and his vast host were encamped. "Take me to your Soltan," she said to several citizens, "I have a message from God to him." But all were afraid; and she went hither and thither, much perplexed, till one was found who had courage to tell Achmet Bassa, the Grand Vizier: "Here is an Englishwoman who has a message from the great God." "Next morning let her come." She came, and the Sultan bade her "speak God's word without fear, and say neither more nor less, for whatever it may be, we have a good heart to hear it." When she had spoken she asked, "Hast thou understood these things?" And he replied, "Yea, every word; and it is truth." Mahmoud much wished her to stay among his people; and, when she refused, he would fain have given her an escort to Constantinople, lest harm might befall her in his dominions. She courteously declined this offer, and "without the least hurt or scoff" got safely back, having found the Sultan as friendly as Quakers in after times have found various Czars of Russia.

Certainly the Turk's conduct contrasts strikingly with that of the New Englanders, with whom religious freedom ought

to have been not a motto, but a principle of action. Alas! it meant (as it almost always did in those days) not freedom for all alike, but "freedom for ourselves to think and do as we like." Even after Charles the Second had compelled them to give up actively persecuting, they declined to admit the Friends to fellowship, "Quakers, Indians, libertines, and malefactors" being alike incapable of civil rights.

During the Commonwealth they were free to do their worst, with the result that, by law, "men and women of that cursed sect commonly called Quakers," were flogged from town to town, and put across the frontier with the assurance that death would be the penalty of again entering the heritage of the Saints. Others were imprisoned without even straw to lie on, and flogged with knotted scourges. Three young women "were sentenced to be whipped through eleven towns, a distance of nearly eighty miles." At the third town one was nearly dead, and "the sight of their torn bodies so moved the inhabitants that they made the constables give them up," a deliverance which three incorrigibles at once signalled by holding a meeting. Other Friends had the right ear cut off; and when one of them, son of Colonel Rous, a wealthy Barbadoes planter, claimed the right of trial in an English Court, he was cried down with "No appeal to England." Banishment to Barbadoes was the lightest punishment; but they so often reappeared, whether from over sea or across the frontier, that at last it was determined to inflict the death penalty.

One of the sufferers clearly foresaw his doom. "The word of the Lord," he said, "came unto me, expressly commanding me to pass to the town of Boston, my life to lay down in His will for the accomplishing of His service." Another said to the magistrates, "Assuredly, if you put us to death, swift destruction will come upon you." "God's judgements are not come upon us yet," scoffingly replied Major-General Adderton; but a sudden and shocking death soon overtook him, says the Friend's narrative; while another of the Judges, John Norton, soon after leant his head against a mantelpiece in his own house, and never spoke again. Nevertheless, the sentence was carried out, and in October, 1659, Marmaduke Stevenson, a young Yorkshire farmer, and William Robinson, his comrade, were hanged on Boston Common: Mary Dyer, who had

been condemned along with them, being reprieved at the gallows' foot, on her son's undertaking (without her consent) that she should never return to Massachusetts. The friends of the dead were not allowed to provide coffins for them, nor even to enclose the pit into which they were thrown. Wilson, a minister who had scoffed at them along the road to death—when Robinson tried to address the crowd, crying: "We suffer not as evil doers, but as those who have testified and manifested the truth"—stopped his mouth with the retort, "Hold thy tongue; thou art going to die with a lie in thy mouth," composed a scoffing song upon them. One does not hear of any judgement lighting on him, though surely he deserved it far more than did the Judges. With these the fear of witchcraft may have weighed; it was still very strong in New England, witness the fact that in 1655, a woman of rank and great ability, Ann Hibbins, sister of Deputy-Governor Bellingham, and wife of a leading magistrate, had been put to death as a witch; and the year after, Ann Austin and Mary Fisher (the interviewer of Sultan Mahmoud) who had run over from Barbadoes, were brutally "searched for witch marks," which, however, the experts were not unanimous about finding.

Mary Dyer soon showed that she was no party to her son's undertaking. Five months after he took her away she felt herself "called" to go back to Boston. Early in 1660 she came back, and found many Friends in prison; and after preaching for ten days she was brought before the General Court. "I came," she said, "last time praying you to repeal your unrighteous law of banishment on pain of death; and that same is my work now and earnest request; and if you refuse to repeal it, the Lord will send other of his servants to witness against it." "Are you a prophetess?" cried Governor Endicott. "I speak the words which the Lord speaketh to me; and this thing shall surely come to pass." "Away with her," interrupted Endicott; and next day she was walked off to the Common with a strong guard of soldiers and drummers before and behind, to drown her voice should she try to address the people. After she had mounted the ladder she was told, "You shall have your life if you'll promise to return home." "Nay, that I cannot," she replied; "for what the Lord bids me, that I must do, abiding in His will, faithful unto death." "You

are guilty of your own blood, then." "Nay, I came to take blood-guiltiness from you, desiring you to repeal an unrighteous law. Therefore my blood will be required at your hands." "Do you desire an elder to pray for you?" "Nay, rather a child; but I desire the prayers of all the people of God."

Eight months later, William Ledra (a Cornish man, like Latay, who, as a friend, forewarned James the Second of his fall), banished from Boston in 1658, came back, and, after a winter's imprisonment, chained in a bare cell with open window—a fearful change from his sunny Barbadoes home—was condemned to die for returning after banishment. Ledra's testimony a little before his death was: "The noise of the whip and the threatening of a halter did no more affright me through the strength and power of God than if they had threatened to have bound a spider's web on my finger;" and before the Court he said, "Your sentence is no more terrifying to me than if you had taken a feather and blown it up in the air."

Soon after, Wenlock Christison was condemned; but, as he was led back to prison, he prophesied: "I believe you shall never more take Quakers' lives from them. Note my words." And the very day before that fixed for his execution news came from England that Charles's order to stop proceedings was on its way out. Christison, therefore, with twenty-six others, was taken out of prison; and, after two had been whipped through Boston, the whole were led by a party of soldiers across the frontier.

Charles, when he read the Quakers' memorial, promised speedy help. "Lo, these are my good subjects of New England!" he cried, not unmindful of the circumstances under which they had fled from what they called his father's idolatry and tyranny. His letter to Endicott he pointedly sent by the hands of a Quaker, Shattock, who had been twice scourged and banished from Massachusetts. Charles insisted that, if any were waiting in prison, they should be sent to England for trial. But the colonists quietly set aside this demand, which the King, on his side, never tried to enforce. So ends the story of the Massachusetts martyrs. A year later the Quakers learnt the truth of the maxim: "Put not your trust in Princes." Charles had found that "their principles were inconsistent with any kind of Government; wherefore our Parliament hath advised us to make a

sharp law against them, and we are content that you, 'the New Englanders,' should do the like."

Massachusetts acted on this. No more were hanged; but they suffered pretty much as their brethren at home were suffering, especially when, in 1678, they were accused of a plot to burn down Boston. Then came James the Second, whose chief adviser, Penn, was a Quaker; and James really meant to be tolerant; his Irish Parliament, mostly Catholics, showed a wonderful moderation compared with the treatment that Protestant Parliaments gave to Catholics. For nearly ten years of William and Mary's reign the Quakers fared as before, in the Old World and in the New; and not until 1702 did Penn succeed in persuading Anne to free them from their civil disabilities in New England.

Why did Massachusetts take the lead in persecution? It was the most masterful of the States, always anxious to bring the others, especially Rhode Island, into dependence. Its bigotry was not confined to Quakers; in 1651, three Rhode Island Baptists, who had ventured across the frontier to visit an aged friend, were brought before Governor Endicott—"insolence and brutality enthroned in the highest place," says historian Doyle. Pastor Wilson, who afterwards scoffed at Stevenson and his fellow martyr, actually "cursed and smote them." They were condemned to heavy fines, with flogging in case of non-payment. Unknown Friends paid for two; the third was scourged, amid such sympathy from some of the onlookers that one of these died of excitement before he got home. Among many strange phenomena of bigotry none is stranger than the narrow intolerance which turned the Pilgrim Fathers into cruel persecutors.

"À L'OMNIBUS."

THE climate of Hyères is perfect, its sky is unclouded, its palm trees are lovely; but, be the reason what it may, poor fickle human nature soon wearies of its gentle, changeless beauty; and, in spite of the sunshine, to enjoy which they have perhaps travelled a thousand miles, those who stay there long feel a deep depression stealing over them, which, in its turn, yields to a restless craving for change. We were already in this second stage, for we had been at Hyères more than a month, and I, at least, was firmly resolved that the time

had come when I must, and would, leave it; yes, though I went on foot. We were only three women, none of us particularly young or beautiful; and, like many of our sex, we could be much more lavish with our time than our money, for the very good reason that our supply of the latter was much more limited than of the former. This being the case, it was perhaps natural that my suggestion of leaving Hyères at once, whilst we could still lay claim to a measureable amount of our natural amiability, should be received by X and Y with mild, but firm, opposition. They quite admitted the truth of all I advanced, but stoutly maintained that we could not afford to travel further. I strove to convince them of their mistake; but the fallacy of my argument was so very apparent that I gave it up in despair. There seemed to be no escape, and our spirits were already below zero, when X suddenly started as if struck by a brilliant idea. She glanced from Y to me, as if in doubt as to how we should receive her suggestion. At last she began: "Why should we not travel?" . . . then she flushed and laughed.

"What do you mean?" we asked impatiently.

"Why should we not travel à l'omnibus?"

The idea was an inspiration, and to this day I feel we owe a debt of gratitude to its originator.

At first, it is true, Y, who has a dead weight of respectability hidden deep down in her nature, feebly remonstrated. She had never heard of any one travelling à l'omnibus, therefore it could not be correct—and without a gentleman too! But, as her love of conventionality was less strong than her dread of being accused of snobbery, we had not much difficulty in bringing her over to our way of thinking; and, before we went to bed that night, our plans for travelling down the Riviera à l'omnibus were complete.

Perhaps I ought to explain what is meant by travelling à l'omnibus. Well, in the first place, l'omnibus is not, as one might rationally conclude, a large vehicle on four wheels, such as we are only too well acquainted with in our London thoroughfares, but a train, the slowest and sleepest of all trains that were ever invented. If you remember that in France there are four sorts of trains, "le rapide," "l'express," "la petite vitesse," and "l'omnibus," decreasing in speed from the first to the last; further, that travelling in le rapide is no small trial to the patience of those who are

accustomed to English railways; you may form some idea of the rate at which l'omnibus advances. Only last winter l'omnibus from San Remo to Rome arrived at its destination just twenty-four hours behind time; whilst it is a well-known fact that, if you miss the train at Provins, a little town about fifty miles from Paris, with a good horse you can easily overtake it at Longueville, a village some five miles distant.

Further, you must not forget that travelling à l'omnibus means third class, that is in carriages for which "sheep-pen" is an appellation rather flattering than otherwise. Still l'omnibus is cheap, and that, for us, covered a multitude of sins.

An examination of the time-table revealed an unexpected difficulty. The railway companies seem to be actuated by an inexplicable, but inexorable, distaste for passengers à l'omnibus. Not content with giving them the smallest, hardest, and most uncomfortable of seats, and the tiniest of windows; and sending them at a rate incalculable from its slowness; they manifest a diabolical ingenuity in discovering the very hours at which no human being would willingly travel, and fix upon this as the time for l'omnibus to start. So thoroughly do they succeed in this work, that although l'omnibus can only take four hours to go from Hyères to San Raphaël, yet we found that, to arrive at the latter town while it was still daylight, we must leave Hyères at five o'clock in the morning, and wait some six or seven hours at La Pauline. This discovery damped my ardour considerably; but my suggestion of taking a more expensive train as far as La Pauline, and thus avoiding the long wait, was scornfully put aside by X, who declared that from the first we must be consistent. Now consistency is no doubt an admirable quality; but, if it means turning out on a chill February morning, I for one must confess that my moral fibre is not of that robust order that would justify me in laying claim to such a virtue. It was all very well for those old Spartans to practise that sort of self-denial—not that they had any comfortable beds to leave—I always like to imagine all sorts of strong-minded virtues coming quite easy and natural to them; but I belong to a degenerate race, and have not the slightest wish to encroach upon the preserves of my betters.

I do not know what would have been the end of our difficulties if we had not found an old fiacre-driver, who promised to drive us to La Pauline, for five francs, and,

for an extra franc to let us have a look at La Crau, in passing.

I never saw Hyères look more lovely than it did on the morning on which we left it. The sun was shining gloriously, and the air was charged with that subtle essence which acts on one's nerves like champagne. It is only an hour's drive to La Crau; but once there, what a change! Through a small ravine we had come to the northern side of the mountain, and found at once those cutting east winds the very existence of which we had forgotten. It was as if we had, in one hour, stepped from summer into mid-winter. The church at La Crau—the only object of interest—is as ugly, dirty, and tinselled, as only a Southern church can be; but it presents a curiosity, unique in its way. At one side of the altar there is a large table about nine feet square, covered with green baize; in the centre of this is placed a rather fashionably-dressed doll, some ten inches in height, and, by its side, a cradle, in which is lying a little wooden doll. These two evidently represent the Madonna and Child. The rest of the table is covered with quantities of comic little wooden figures, arrayed in every imaginable costume—soldiers; sailors; Jewish pedlars; shepherds tending the woolliest of little penny sheep; three old men in black cloth coats standing by pasteboard elephants; a tiny little lion reposing by the side of an immense lamb that could easily have devoured it; wild beasts, birds, serpents, all mixed together in happy confusion; and a tall man (another wooden doll) with long, black nineteenth-century whiskers looking down upon them all with an expression of benevolent sympathy. The whole was evidently intended to represent certain scriptural scenes; but what they were we failed utterly to discover.

In spite of a solemn vow to avoid all such places, we were tempted into an exquisitely beautiful church at La Pauline. It was built by the owner of a château near, and is an exact copy of some private chapel in Rome. It is very small—a hundred people could scarcely sit in it; but the design is so pure, the carving so exquisite, that its beauty is most impressive. A lovely statue of the Virgin in Parian marble is the only thing within the building. There is not a picture; not a touch of ornamentation; its simplicity is perfect. Just within the door, however, there was a notice written by the Bishop of a neighbouring diocese setting forth that, in gratitude for the kindness he had received

whilst staying at the château, he granted an "indulgence plénière"—a free pardon—for all sins committed during a fortnight to any person who should repeat certain prayers before the Virgin in that chapel. There it stood, clear as ink and paper could make it; unmistakable proof that gratitude, at least, was not one of the virtues in which the kindly prelate would be found lacking. There is something sublime in such self-confidence. I felt quite a longing to know the man.

When we went to the railway station the officials, one and all, obstinately refused to take our word for it that we knew what we wanted. Our request for third-class tickets was met by a declaration that "*les Anglaises*" only travelled first-class, and that it was quite impossible for us to do anything else; and many were the explanations entered into to convince us of this fact. When we turned a deaf ear to all their arguments, nothing could exceed their amazement. They watched our every movement; every stranger who entered the station was brought to look at "*les Anglaises qui voyageaient à l'omnibus*"; and, as the idea that "*les Anglaises*" could be short of money never seemed to occur to them, I think they finally decided that we were harmless lunatics.

At last we were allowed to enter our sheep-pen en route for San Raphaël. Yes, certainly the seats were hard; how could uncovered wood be anything else? The windows, too, were undoubtedly small; but then, as a compensation, instead of our countrymen, of whom we, like all other travellers, were heartily wearied, we were surrounded by bright, clean, chattering Frenchwomen, who amusingly mixed together every imaginable patois. At first they watched us with a certain amount of wonder; they were evidently not accustomed to travelling with foreigners; and when they discovered that we could not only understand them, but also speak a language which they could understand, their amusement knew no bounds. They talked, and chatted, and overwhelmed us with kindness. One wished us to taste her fruit; another offered us her wine; and all kept up a running comment of information upon the scenery and the villages we passed through. Some of them told us their personal history from their earliest childhood; and not one, I think, failed to make us acquainted with whither they were travelling, and why. They were all women of the poorer class, wives of small

shopkeepers, or of working men, but nothing could exceed the good-humoured courtesy with which they strove to make us feel at home; from first to last there was not a rough word, or an ill-natured glance; and when we arrived at San Raphaël we all felt that on this journey, for the first time since we were in France, we had really been brought into contact with French people and French life.

Some four or five years ago San Raphaël was seized with a sudden and violent love for the English nation. The originator and encourager of this attachment was the Mayor, an ambitious little gentleman who, having watched with envious eyes English gold pouring into Cannes, Nice, and Mentone, was desirous of turning the Pactolian stream to San Raphaël, and set his fertile brain to discover the means by which his native village might be made to rival, if not surpass, these prosperous towns. The whole of his fortune—he was a rich man—together with all the money the country side could produce, was employed upon this work, and all for the sake of the English. Other nations have been treated with the most profound neglect, but for “*les Anglais*” nothing has been spared. It really is a lovely little place if they would only have left Nature alone, but boulevards—one house in each—baths, casinos, walks, drives, all startlingly new, stare at you from every side. One immense house is placarded “*Seminary for Young English Ladies* ;” another, “*Academy for English Boys*.” There are mansions, villas, cottages, to suit every taste and purse; but one and all they are empty: and not only are they so now, but always have been, and always will be, in the same state.

San Raphaël has proved a failure. In spite of all its efforts it cannot draw the English; and I do not know which is the more piteous sight, all these houses standing waiting for the inhabitants who never come, or the owners of them watching with anxious glances the arrival of each train, in the vain hope that it may bring a purchaser or tenant.

Frégus, though not two miles distant, has escaped the Anglo and every other mania that has been afloat these last thousand years. It looks as if it had stood untouched for ages. One droll custom of the Frégeois amused us not a little. If you enquire the way of anyone in the street, he invariably apologises most profusely for not being able to take you to the place himself. One old woman, who

had lost the use of her legs, almost wept as she entreated us to believe that she would most willingly have accompanied us if it had been possible. An old man, whom I stopped on the road intending to ask him the nearest way to San Raphael, greeted me with the assurance that he felt delighted and thankful to see me in such good health. After convincing himself that I really was as well as I looked, he proceeded to give me a great deal of valuable information with regard to the weather, crops, soil, etc., all before I had any opportunity of pursuing my enquiry; and it was not until we had had almost a quarter of an hour's conversation, that I succeeded in obtaining an answer. Even then he insisted upon going with us part of the way, and when he took a respectfully tender farewell, he assured us that nothing but the very important nature of the business upon which he was engaged prevented his accompanying us back to the hotel. There was something very touching in the simple, kindly nature of these people. It seemed to take one back to those early days, when every chance stranger was welcomed as a guest.

After a pleasant time at San Raphaël, we again mounted into l'omnibus, in spite of all the efforts of the railway porters to keep us out. They were sure we were making a mistake; and when at length we convinced them that no amount of persuasion would induce us to travel in carriages more befitting the dignity of our nation, the significant glances they exchanged showed, but too clearly, that there, as at La Pauline, they thought we had overstepped the narrow line which separates English eccentricity from madness.

As far as Cannes, two respectable countrywomen were our only companions; but there we had a further addition to our company—a tall fierce-looking woman, with a hard weather-beaten face, and a voice that made the very carriage shake as she spoke. As she took her seat, she cast a keen searching glance at each of us in turn, and then gave a slight toss of her head—the sort of gesture a war-horse might give at scenting a combat afar off. The fierceness of her appearance was increased by a bright scarlet handkerchief, which she wore tightly twisted around her head. Her arms were uncovered—such arms too; looking at their hard, swollen muscles, no one would have guessed the sex of their owner. She was such a perfect model of the popular conception of a Com-

munist, that I would have given a good deal for a sketch of her ; but she was much too formidable a personage to take liberties of that sort with.

Just before the train started, two laundresses, with immense baskets full of clean linen, came to the carriage door. One mounted, but when the other attempted to follow, one of the women who had come with us from San Raphaël, remonstrated. She put it very gently, but unfortunately she gave as a reason for objecting to the entrance of the second basket, that it would inconvenience "*les dames Anglaises*." There was evidently something in what she said that acted like the proverbial red rag upon the excitable nerves of the Communist : she sprang out of the carriage, forced the laundress with her basket to get in, shut the door with a bang that almost shook us from our seats, and then began her attack. This, ostensibly, was directed against the country-woman, but evidently we were the real offenders ; and for a few minutes she poured upon our devoted heads a perfect volley of rage, scorn, and abuse. Why were we there ? Had we paid more for our tickets than she had for hers ? Did the clothes baskets, forsooth, take up more space than our rugs ? In what were we better than honest, hard-working laundresses ? were amongst the indignant enquiries which she hurled, with dramatic force, at our defender. It was clear it never occurred to her that we could understand what she was saying ; and I must confess it was by no means an easy task to follow her, for she spoke the wildest patois it has ever been my fate to hear. At length, as no one answered a word, when she had given free vent to her fury and become more calm, X took advantage of a moment's silence to ask the country-woman the name of a village we were passing through. The Communist started violently, when she heard her, and asked suddenly : "*Comprenez-vous le français ?*"

"Mais oui," X replied quietly.

"Yes, yes ; you understand French as I am speaking it now ; but the patois, my jargon, such as I was speaking a few minutes ago, you don't understand that ?"

There was real anxiety in her voice as she asked this question.

"Certainly I do."

"You understood what I said about—about—that basket ?"

"I understood every word," replied X, with the greatest sang-froid.

In my life I had never seen such pro-

found amazement as settled on the face of the Communist. A deep flush passed rapidly across it, and if it were not for the manifest absurdity of applying the word to such a very martial-looking individual, I should say she looked positively shy.

For a few minutes she sat in silence, and then, with a real honest smile beaming all over her face, she said :

"Il faut que vous ayez de bien bons caractères," meaning that our tempers must indeed be good for us to have listened quietly to her storm of abuse, and made no sign.

I suppose she thought she owed us some amends for her unprovoked attack, for now she overwhelmed us with gracious speeches, her kindness being quite as demonstrative as her enmity. She was a market gardener by calling, and had had a hard struggle to bring up her sons.

"But I did it," she said triumphantly. "I brought them up, all three, without the help of a sou from anybody ; eh ! and was ready to start them in business, too, and then they could have looked after me a bit when I am old ; but"—she added bitterly, the old fierce look returning to her face, "but the Government took them all, one after another ; just when they might have helped me a bit, they drew unlucky numbers, and were obliged to go. It is always the same ! when they are little, and have to be looked after, nobody takes any heed of them, but as soon as they are worth anything, they are sharply enough looked after. Don't talk to me of Governments, Republics, and Empires, they are all alike. With them it is always 'Give, give, give ;' but just you ask them to give you anything, and you'll see what they say."

I asked her what she thought of the Communists. Again her face flushed fiercely ; evidently this was another red-rag subject for her irascible disposition :

"Mauvaise gens, mauvaise gens," she replied. "They will neither work nor want. I have worked hard all my life, and they would like to come and take my fruit trees and my cabbages. That's what they would like. But let them come and try," she added, in a tone which made me think that, if I were they, I would much rather not.

Then, after pausing a minute, wishing, I suppose, to bring the case home to us, she continued : "There is nothing good in the Communists. It is just as if I should say, because you have that heap of shawls and I haven't one"—she pointed to our travel-

ling rugs—"I shall take one of yours—nay, like enough they would take the lot, and leave you none. That's what the Communists would do. There's neither right nor reason in them; idle good-for-nothings! Let everybody have what he has worked for and no more, say I."

With which praiseworthy sentiment she was preparing to leave us, for we were already at Nice; but at the door of the carriage she hesitated, as if she had something on her mind, and then began:

"It is all very well for you to travel with the likes of us in France. We may be a bit rough, but we wouldn't hurt a hair of your head, not we; but you mustn't try it on with those Italians"—applying to the man adjective more forcible than elegant. "You mustn't travel 'à l'omnibus' with them. I know them. Now, you won't, will you?" She spoke almost pleadingly.

The laundresses, with their baskets, also left us at Nice, and in their place came a handsomely-dressed woman with a thin, faded face. Her eyes and mouth seemed never to rest, and her fingers worked in and out with a never-ceasing motion, as she studied eagerly a little card covered with figures and mysterious signs. No need for her to say that Monte Carlo was her destination. "Gambler" was written on every line of her face, in every movement of her body. In the station at Monte Carlo there were many of her kind sauntering up and down, all with that same air of feverish restlessness; all hoping to find fortune, but, apparently, none having found it.

Less than an hour brought us to the frontier, but a glance at the Italian omnibus and its occupants convinced us that the Communist, or rather the anti-Communist, was right. We could face neither the one nor the other.

Since that day I have always travelled à l'omnibus when in France, and I have never met with anything but kindly courtesy and friendly help.

MAKING A NAME.

ONE of the peculiarities of some who pride themselves on being what they call plain, matter-of-fact people, is that of insisting that it is a matter of indifference what a thing is called so long as its nature is satisfactory. Any objections to this opinion, they imagine, are at once swept away by quoting the mighty Shakespeare's words, "What's in a name?"

Dare any puny mortal of the nineteenth century set himself up against such an authority? They forget that Shakespeare gives this as the utterance of a foolish, love-sick girl, ignorant of the world, and of what is or is not important. Thinking of her lover, who is a Montague, and, consequently, an enemy to her father's house, she cries:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.

The dramatist shows us in the following scenes that there were, in her lover's name, sorrow and death to themselves and to those they dearly loved.

A name is certainly not the least important factor in a man's career. How much more difficult would it be for a Muggins or a Finigan to gain acceptance as a poet, however great his talent, than for a Tennyson or a Milton! No matter how great a man's energy, talent, or courage may be, an odd or ridiculous name will be a clog to him through life, and add immensely to his difficulties in making his way upwards. Of what avail a man's aristocratic appearance, correct dress, coat of the most fashionable cut, and satisfactory balance at the bank, if his visiting card condemns him to pity or to ridicule. What a consolation it must be to a lady afflicted with a disagreeable name to know that she may have an opportunity of changing it for a better, in a way at once gratifying to her pride and her affections! This privilege of the ladies has been assumed by the Popes, who change their names when they are chosen as successors to St. Peter. The introducer of this Papal custom, Sergius the Second, may well be excused for the innovation, seeing that his own name signifies Hog's-mouth. Melancthon was not above this weakness, as he adopted the Greek form of his proper name, which signified "Black Earth"; and the learned Erasmus made a similar transformation of his Dutch name, Gerard.

In the time of Louis the Fourteenth, a distinguished writer, who was a Member of the Academy, a Councillor of State, and the friend of Richelieu, had the misfortune to bear the inappropriate name of Gueux (Beggar). Can we wonder at his adopting the name of his patrimonial estate, and calling himself Balzac? Many other instances might be quoted of men of talent and eminence being dissatisfied with the names that were borne by their ancestors.

Some people, in their anxiety to compensate their children for the vulgar or ridiculous family names which they have

inherited, couple with them what they consider aristocratic or euphonious Christian names. Hence we have such combinations as Gladys Beatrice Higgs, Constance Anrelia Smith, and Victor Augustus Jones. One can sympathise with the fact that many pleasing hours of consultation and discussion are given to the young mother and her husband in deciding what name will sound most mellifluously, and assort most fittingly with the sterling and attractive qualities which are so perceptibly packed up in that little cherub, their first-born.

The point is one decidedly deserving of consideration and discussion. How many a child is assured of a competence for life by the judicious bestowal of a name in baptism, that brings as a consequence the satisfactory insertion of that name in the will of the pleased or flattered godfather! How many moments of pain have thoughtless parents given to their children by their bad taste in choosing for them ludicrous names! How many a stand-up fight at school had young Tomkins to resent the insults brought upon him by reason of his Christian name of Zebedee! And what a perpetual nuisance it was to him when he entered the world and commenced his business life!

How many tears of vexation have been shed by that pretty girl, Miss Davies, in consequence of the gibes of her girl friends at her name of Sapphira! To show how easily a name may be made a source of annoyance to its owner, we may recall the case of Mr. Lyon, who, being exceedingly particular in his personal adornment, was nicknamed by his friends Dandy Lyon. He eventually succeeded to a large fortune, which was made more pleasing to him by the stipulation that he should take the name of Winder. He hoped now to escape for ever from the annoying reference to his fondness for fine apparel; but his persecutors, not to be denied, at once dubbed him Beau Winder.

Undoubtedly a man's name has much to do with his reception amongst strangers. A namesake is generally looked upon with goodwill, and one bearing a name once dear to us, or even coming from a town the name of which calls up pleasant memories, has already gained an advantage with us.

On the other hand, a man's name may excite fear and horror in consequence of some superstition connected with it. In Henry the Sixth, Shakespeare makes the

captured Duke of Suffolk say to his executioner, Walter Whitmore:

Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.
A cunning man did calculate my birth,
And told me that by water I should die.
Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded;
Thy name is Gaultier, being rightly sounded.

In Richard the Third, Clarence's death is ascribed to a similar superstition. The crook-backed Glo'ester, meeting his brother being conveyed a prisoner to the Tower, asks why the King has ordered this. Clarence replies:

Because my name is George.

He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;
And from the cross row plucks the letter G,
And says a wizard told him that by G
His issue disinherited should be;
And for my name of George begins with G.
It follows in his thoughts that I am he.

The elder Mr. Shandy had, as we all know, some strong opinions as to names. He thought "that there was a strange kind of magic bias which good or bad names, as he called them, irresistibly impressed upon our character and conduct. How many," he would add, "are there who might have done exceeding well in the world, had not their characters and spirits been totally depressed and Nicodemused into nothing!" There were numbers of names of the Jack, Dick, and Tom class, which he looked upon as neutral names, which operated very little either way. Andrew was something like a negative quantity in algebra: it was worse than nothing. "William stood pretty high, Numps was low, and Nick, he said, was the devil."

The importance of a name upon the fate of persons and things must have been in Falstaff's mind when he pleaded with Prince Hal that when he should be King, "we that take purses shall not be called thieves, but 'Diana's Foresters,' 'Gentlemen of the Shade,' 'Minions of the Moon.'" His follower, Pistol, too, when his comrade Nym remarks that

The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest,
gravely and sagely reproves him with,
"Convey, the wise it call."

One of our commonest proverbs enshrines the universally acknowledged truth, that to give a dog a bad name is equivalent to hanging him. Who would not think twice before buying a freehold at Damply-in-the-Marsh, or writing for winter quarters at Bleakington-on-the-Wold? Would any old gentleman be likely to engage a valet who gave his name as Jonathan Wild, or a

butler who rejoiced in the name of William Sykes? Either of these, no matter how good a servant he might be, would feel inclined to say with Falstaff, "I would thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought."

The ancients had many superstitions as to names, and even elevated the study to a science under the title of Onomantia.

When the Romans raised an army, or numbered the citizens, they were always careful that the first name taken should be an auspicious one. More than one Emperor owed his elevation simply to his name; and Cæsar, in his expedition to Africa, gave a command to an obscure Scipio, because the people believed that the Scipios were invincible in Africa.

Similar influences weighed with the French Envoys, who went to negotiate a marriage between one of the Spanish Princesses and Louis the Eighth. They rejected Urraca, the elder and more beautiful Princess, who was intended for their royal master, and preferred her sister, because her name, Blanche, had a more musical sound.

A Spanish Ambassador to the Court of Elizabeth considered his dignity slighted, when the Queen appointed a wealthy citizen to receive him, because his host bore the very short name of John Cuts. He soon found, however, that if Cuts had a short name he had a long purse, and a right royal way of dipping into it for the sake of upholding the English name for hospitality.

Names, then, being of such importance, we cannot be surprised at the efforts men will make to add some lustre to the one they possess, to cause men to speak it with praise or envy; in common parlance, to "make a name." Every man is endowed at birth with what may be termed a name in the rough, the raw material, the plain piece of metal. This, when he starts in life, he proceeds to fashion after his own idea; to file and polish, to hammer or mould, engrave or carve, so that, sooner or later, he may be able to say he has "made a name."

Some make it shine by deeds of splendid daring; others gild and ornament it by actions full of noble charity and self-sacrifice: some by long-suffering and patience make a name that shines for ever in the eyes of mankind. To this natural desire for fame we owe some of the greatest triumphs of bravery, perseverance, and self-devotion in history. For this, men

have turned their backs upon all the comforts of civilisation; have left homes of luxury and wealth; parted from those nearest and dearest to their hearts; and have gone forth to meet hunger, toil, and hardship; to look death in the face; to tramp through burning deserts, or struggle through an Arctic sea; to fight their way through treacherous marsh or mountain pass.

A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire.

Concerning this aspiration the Spectator says: "The love of praise is a passion deeply fixed in the mind of every extraordinary person, and those who are most affected with it, seem most to partake of that particle of the divinity which distinguishes mankind from the inferior creation."

Shakespeare, who embodied this idea of the human craving for fame in his Hotspur, makes him say:

By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks.

The younger Pliny said: "I must confess that nothing employs my thoughts more than the desire I have of perpetuating my name; which, in my opinion, is a design worthy of a man, at least of such one, who, being conscious of no guile, is not afraid to be remembered by posterity." This "afraid to be remembered by posterity," is a rather remarkable expression, and it would be interesting to know what character he had in his mind when he wrote it. Probably it was some great conqueror, some god of war, whose delight was in bloodshed and rapine; one, of whom it might be said:

He left a name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.

One way of making a name and perhaps the most gratifying, is by successful authorship. As the elder Disraeli has well said, "literature is an avenue to glory, ever open for those ingenious men who are deprived of honours or of wealth." Like that illustrious Roman, who owed nothing to his ancestors, these seem self-born; and in the baptism of fame, they have given themselves their name. Bruyère said of men of genius, "these men have neither ancestors nor posterity; they alone compose their whole race."

The fame acquired by authors redounds more to the credit of their country than any other kind of glory. Is there any

name known in war, politics, or art, that can shed so much lustre on our country as that of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton? Undoubtedly we owe some of the greatest intellectual pleasures obtainable to the desire of literary fame, which has urged our men of genius to such perseverance and industry as no other inducement could call forth.

Who hath not owned with rapture-smitten frame
The power of grace, the magic of a name?

Another method of making a name, to which we have already referred, is open only to ladies, and many of them seem to think it the only aim of their existence to gain a name by marriage. It is a trite saying that most novels end where real life begins, that is, in the marriage of the heroine. After struggling and striving, hoping and despairing, sighing and praying, failing or succeeding, through two volumes and a half, the lovers, in the last half volume, finally overcome all obstacles, are satisfactorily married, and, as the old story-books say, live happily ever afterwards.

But all novels are not of this kind. Some show us pictures of real life, wherein we find the gentle Agnes developing into the domestic wolf, before whom the once haughty Frederic trembles in his shoes, and dares not call his latch-key his own: the faithful, devoted Laura, who, in spite of friends and relations, held with unwavering fidelity to the troth plighted to her Alfred, we find eloping to Italy with Alfred's dearest friend; and the fair Sophia—once so fair and joyous, who had no thoughts that were not centred in her beloved Augustus—now that she is fair, fat, and forty, has developed a disastrous but unalterable affection for—alas! must we say it?—the vulgar gin-bottle.

Some have elected to make a name in an easy, profitable, but highly dangerous manner; one by no means novel, but that has been adopted with some success by men of high position in the commercial, political, and even the clerical world. The name made, however, is always one belonging to somebody else, and generally attached to a document of considerable pecuniary value. The laws of this country are distinctly opposed to this method of making a name, which is known as forgery. The celebrated Doctor Dodd suffered for his folly in making a name after this fashion, as Tom Hood reminds us:

A name? Why, wasn't there Doctor Dodd,
That servant at once of Mammon and God,
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,
A prison—a cart—and a rope in it?

Fauntleroy, the banker of Berners Street, met with a similar fate; his taste for other people's names costing the Bank of England three hundred and sixty thousand pounds. Redpath, the railway clerk, and Roupell, once Member of Parliament for Lambeth, were notable examples of men who practised this costly method of making a name.

There are name fanciers who are not satisfied with less than half-a-dozen, each one of which they acquire by the simple process of having a new visiting card printed. These are the people of whom we read as being charged with obtaining money and goods under false pretences. We are at such times informed that they are known under several aliases. It is rather startling to find that the gentleman who has been accepted without distrust as Captain Delafosse in one place, and has been welcomed by the local fashionables as the Honourable Robert Montacute in another, who has won eight hundred pounds of young Bungs, the eminent distiller's son, and run up a big bill at the "Grand," as Sir Charles Levant, is known among the friends of his boyhood's home in Spitalfields as Flash Jim, and received his first "sentence" as James Magga.

Are all the signs of "good blood," all the delicate refinements of manner due to generations of good breeding; all the natural unborn indications of superior birth so easily imitated that the street Arab, graduating from the gutter to the betting ring, and thence, by way of billiard rooms, sporting clubs, and card parties, can make his way among "the nobe" and be accepted as one of them? Is the superior plumage so easily imitated, or is the jackdaw, after all, much the same bird as the peacocks who look down upon him?

Perhaps the kind of name acquired with the smallest amount of effort on the part of its owner is the nickname. A personal peculiarity in manner or speech; the love of friends; the dislike of enemies; any of these may be the means of giving a nickname.

Very effective use has been made in the political world of such names. To give your enemies the name of Lollards or Heretics, was at one time a very good way of getting rid of them altogether. Men who might hesitate to injure a fellow-countryman, were led to fight zealously against the rascal "Roundhead," or ungodly "Cavalier." Was it not a glorious action to slay a "malignant," or to cast a "delinquent" into prison? Could one help

feeling a contempt for the "Barebones Parliament," or desire anything else but to put an end to the odious "Rump?" What could be more patriotic than to betray a "Jacobite," especially if your loyalty enabled you to purchase his estate at a very low price? One felt no less respect for a man because he was of a different opinion; but how easy it was to hate and to tell lies about those hateful Whigs or Tories, as the case might be. Even in our own times, a man who objects to a policy of peace at any price may be exposed to the execration of mankind as a "Jingo"; a Liberal or a Radical, with an opinion, or a soul of his own becomes a Renegade; whilst the men who are assassins and traitors on Monday morning, find themselves transformed into impulsive patriots on Friday evening.

Nicknames are common among schoolboys, and are just as often tokens of respect and affection, as of the reverse. Generally the prefix "old," indicates that the nickname is one to be cherished. Is there any one who does not hold in loving memory some "Old Robinson" of his schoolboy days; or who does not still call to mind the prowess and the kindness of some "Old Shanks" or "Magog" of those happy times?

In certain classes of society a man refers to the partner of his joys and sorrows as his "old woman." It is perhaps worthy of remark, that in so doing he has the support of the highest classical authority. We find the Spectator, speaking of Homer's character of a perfect man, says "and to use the expression of the best of Pagan authors, *'vetulam suam protulit immortalitati'*—his old woman was dearer to him than immortality."

Having thus shown you, reader, various ways of making a name, we can only leave you to choose which way you will make one for yourself, if you can. Yet, although all men have a natural passion for glory, the opportunity of gratifying that passion does not come to all. A man may feel within himself that

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name;

and yet that one hour, or even a minute of it, may never be his. It is not given to more than a lucky few to be placed in a groove in life which may lead to glory. Most of us must be satisfied with the simple performance of our duty, and be glad if by so doing we can secure the possession, if not of a great, at any rate of a good name, which, as Shakespeare tells

us, "is the immediate jewel of our souls." We must be content to know that if we are "not the rose, yet we have been near it." If we have not made a name, we have a sort of grand partnership in a long roll of glorious names belonging to our country. Few of us can hope to win a better epitaph than the one poor Keats wrote for himself, when he imagined that his hopes of fame had been crushed by the cruel criticisms of his enemies:

Here lies one whose name was writ in water.

HOW I STRUCK OIL.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at Stonewall Ridge, Pennsylvania, a district where oil was reported to have been discovered in large quantities. At Oil City I had purchased the claim and plant of a prospector, who, according to his own account, was forced to raise a small sum of ready money, even at the sacrifice of enormous wealth in the future. He assured me—in a voice broken by emotion—that if he could have worked his claim a few days longer, and bored a few hundred feet deeper, he would have realised an immense fortune. I was so impressed by the unfortunate position in which he was placed, that I felt quite guilty about accepting his offer. But a hint to that effect appeared to modify his grief more promptly than I had expected, and an extra fifty dollars acted like a sunbeam on snowflakes. His despondency at once melted away. He would not even allow me to thank him. "He might be a poor man," he said; "but he was not mercenary. He was contented, provided he could secure the necessaries of life. He cared not for the gilded chambers of luxury and fashion, and it filled him with joy to be the means of conferring upon a worthy young man a fortune, which Providence, no doubt for some wise purpose, saw fit to withdraw from himself." This view of the situation appeared to gratify him so much that he repeated it over and over again, between the various drinks with which I strove to soothe his agitated spirits.

It was with some difficulty that I got rid of him, in order to set out for my El Dorado; that spot from which my fortune might spring, like a gigantic mushroom, in a single night.

Well, here I was at Stonewall Ridge, and the very first glimpse of the place turned me sick at heart with rage and disappointment. The maudlin scoundrel who sold me the claim had assured me that a populous city was already springing round it, a city with a newspaper, a church, and a schoolhouse. I found a few rows of dismantled log cabins, a dreary waste of refuse and rubbish, and all the dingy wrecks that man flings broadcast on the face of the patient earth.

As I entered the deserted "city," the last inhabitant, a tall, bony Yankee, was moving out with all his goods and chattels. He stared at us with amazement.

"You coming to settle here?" he asked with Yankee curiosity.

"Yes."

"Got a claim?"

"Yes. Solomon T. Jones's."

The gaunt one grinned.

"Waal, he's a cute cuss, is Solomon."

"Have you been prospecting?"

"Yes."

"Did you strike oil?"

"Guess not."

"Did anybody?"

"Guess not."

My heart sank to my boots.

"Do you mean to say that not one of the wells yielded any oil?"

"Nary a well."

"Then it's no use trying any more?"

"Waal, stranger, if you bore into the bowels of the everlasting yearth, you may strike ile; but I'll bet my bottom dollar you don't. S'long."

In another minute he was gone, and with him disappeared all the rose-coloured visions that for days had been flitting before my imagination.

I turned and looked at the men who accompanied me. They were a curious couple. One was a negro, a jovial son of Africa, all teeth and grins; the other, an Englishman, once an undergraduate of Cambridge, now dissipated, red-nosed, bibulous, a confirmed drunkard and loafer. The negro sat on a broken fence, swinging gaily to and fro; the loafer stood gazing with bear-eyed despondency at the scene of desolation that surrounded him.

"I did not imagine," he said reproachfully, "I did not imagine that, when I agreed to join your party, Mr. Drysdale, I should be brought to a place so utterly uncivilised as even to be without a bar—and the weather so distressingly dry, too."

Whereat the jovial negro turned up the

whites of his eyes and laughed in a way that did one good to hear. The speech and accent of the loafer were so entirely out of keeping with his disreputable appearance, that I invariably felt a shock of surprise whenever he opened his mouth—which, to do him justice, he rarely did, except to quench his illimitable thirst. Our future turns on trifles. His work were like the last straw on the camel's back.

"Confound you," I said angrily, "are you going to begin shirking already? Why don't you find out the claim and get to work, instead of skulking about with your hands in your pockets, you shuffling old humbug."

"Why, surely, Mr. Drysdale, you don't intend to prosecute this enterprise any further."

"Sir," I shouted, "I'll bore into this confounded rock until I reach the Antipodes before I'll give up, and if you want to pocket a single dollar of your wages you'd better start work at once."

Two or three evenings afterwards, I was sitting in a dilapidated cabin listening to the monotonous rumble of the engine in the adjoining derrick house. I had, at length, grown utterly hopeless and desperate. I had staked everything I possessed on this last chance, and the result was only too apparent. Poverty stared me in the face; and its gaze seemed very grim and repellent to one who had scarcely ever known an unsatisfied desire. I had found life, hitherto, a pleasant comedy; it was growing tragic now. I groaned with shame as I realised how foolish I had been, how I had thrown away precious opportunities that could never again be mine, how I had squandered in the pursuit of pleasure golden hours that could never be recalled. Men I had known in my youth—schoolfellows and college companions—by steady application had laid the foundation of success in the future, while I was so ignorant of men and the world, that any wild scheme attracted me, any blundering scoundrel could fool and laugh at me. I writhed with self-contempt, and the gloom of utter hopelessness grew darker and darker around me. For the first time I was awakened to the realities of life, and realised what was meant by the struggle for existence. To what could I look forward? I knew no trade, no profession, no calling of any kind; I was a superfluous unit in the midst of toiling millions. The old house I had learnt to love was gone for ever.

Polly was as far removed from me as if she had been an Empress. I saw nothing before me but a lifelong and monotonous struggle for a bare subsistence. Is it any wonder that with a young man's hopeless despair my thoughts turned towards self-destruction? If life was to be a perpetual burden, a ceaseless struggle, why not end it at once? If it was a crime to destroy myself, surely Heaven in pity for my ignorance and misery would pardon me. I took up the revolver that lay beside me and stepped out of the cabin. I wanted to catch a last glimpse of the beautiful world. It was a lovely night, the moon shining down from a cloudless sky, and throwing across my path the long black shadows of the towering pines. I wandered away through the deserted cabins along the bank of a noisy little stream till the gaunt frame of the derrick was lost to sight. Then I sat down besides the rippling water bright with wandering moonbeams, and thought of kind-hearted little Polly, and wondered what her life would be when I had passed out of it. Solemn thoughts haunted me in those still moments, thoughts that only come to a human being when he stands face to face with death, and of which I feel it would be almost irreverent to speak. And yet in spite of my gloom and despair I was too young, too full of vigorous life, not to shrink from so miserable a fate. My fingers toyed mechanically with the revolver, but I could not resolve to draw the trigger. Indeed, it was with a sense of relief that I suddenly remembered I had still an imperative duty to perform. I had forgotten to write to Polly. It would be cruel in the extreme to leave her in doubt as to my fate, to condemn her to vain waiting and watching for my reappearance. Though I never really swerved from my purpose, I must own that I felt like a reprieved criminal when I rose and walked back again to the cabin.

As I was making my way through the ruined huts I caught sight of a figure rushing wildly to and fro, as if in search of someone. Drawing nearer I could see that it was the negro, who was familiarly known as Jumbo. The man's antics were so extravagant that for a while I believed him to be mad, and felt strongly induced to keep out of his way. Before I could make up my mind he caught sight of me, and pounced on me like a hawk.

"Am dat you, boss? Oh, golly, am dat you? You come along hyar, jest come straight along."

He seized my arm and dragged me towards the claim at a speed that almost deprived me of breath. I struggled, and shouted, and made use of the strongest language I could think of, but without the slightest effect. He was powerful and vigorous, with muscles of iron and lungs of brass. Fortunately, as I thought then, his career was brought to a close by an unexpected descent into a disused tank. He fell underneath and knocked the breath out of himself, so I arose and sat on him, arming myself with a stake of wood that happened to lie handy.

"What's the meaning of all this?" I panted. "Have you gone raving mad?"

"Ile! by golly; ile, ile!"

"What!"

"Dat ar darned old well am spouting like Joner's whale."

In another second I was running at full speed towards the derrick, followed by Jumbo hurrahing at the pitch of his voice. I found the loafer standing in the moonlight, smoking an ancient and fragmentary clay pipe while he contemplated, with peaceful serenity, a dark and evil-smelling liquid gurgling swiftly into the open tanks.

"In a week from now," he remarked with pensive hopefulness, "there will be a drinking-saloon in the immediate neighbourhood."

He was right. There were several. In a fortnight the whole district was alive with men, and the smoke went curling up from a hundred houses. My good fortune seemed to me at the time to be little short of a miracle; but the explanation is a simple one. The other prospectors had missed the vein by only a score of yards or so; and, had Solomon T. Jones bored a couple of hundred feet deeper than he did, he would have struck oil in the very well he imagined worthless. Before the news of my discovery leaked out and affected the market, I had communicated with an agent at Oil City, who sold as much oil as he could place for me at eighty-five to ninety cents. per barrel. The well spouted two or three thousand barrels a day, and I easily fulfilled my contracts. Then, when the news began to spread, and all the "wild-catters" in the neighbourhood came thronging as thick as flies in summer, and the price of oil came down with a run, I sold out to a company, and found myself the possessor of a sum far in excess of my most sanguine expectations. I gave a substantial bonus to Jumbo and the Loafer, and was even foolish enough to send a cheque to

the swindler Jones, who had sold me the claim.

Then I set out for England as fast as rail and steam could carry me. The time was growing short, the year perilously near its close, and I was haunted by a constant dread that some accident would delay me, and prevent me arriving in time to pay off the mortgage. Of course, the most sensible way to accomplish my object would have been to make an arrangement with one of the New York bankers, so that a telegram to my solicitors on the other side would have settled the business at once. But I was in such a state of excitement and so ignorant of business arrangements that the idea never even occurred to me. Even when New York had long ago faded in the distance, and we were churning our way across the Atlantic, I remained restless and uneasy. I paced ceaselessly up and down the deck, quite unable to take any share in the amusements and occupations with which my fellow passengers succeeded in whiling away the time. Indeed, I made myself a perfect nuisance with my constant questioning, and badgered the unfortunate captain till he fairly swore at me.

In spite of my presentiments of evil we made a fairly quick passage, and arrived at Liverpool several hours sooner than we anticipated. The moment I got free of the Custom House I jumped into a hansom and drove full speed to the central station.

How slowly the train that carried me towards Polly seemed to move! It had been fine during the early part of the day, but now a drizzling rain set in, and the atmosphere grew thick with fog. When at length I arrived at Mr. Gunson's, it was quite dark. I sprang from the car and rang loudly at the bell. A footman I did not recognise opened the door.

"Is Mr. Gunson in?" I asked breathlessly.

"Yes, sir," replied the man, whose face seemed strangely serious. "But I'm afraid he can't see you."

"Nonsense! I'm an old friend of the family. Is he in the library?"

"Yes, sir; but——"

"All right. I'll find him."

I darted upstairs and entered the library without knocking. I was startled to find the old man sitting with bowed head before a dying fire.

"Mr. Gunson!"

He looked up with a start, and I saw that his eyes were heavy with tears.

"What! Is that you, Jack?"

"Yes, sir, and I've got the money. 'The Willows' is mine now, and Polly's mine too, isn't she?"

"My poor boy! My poor boy!"

"But you don't seem to understand, sir. I've got it. I've got the money."

"The money, boy! What money?"

"The money to pay off the mortgage."

"Ah, yes, yes. I'm glad to hear it. You're a good boy—always kind and good to her. I wish I had been. Heaven forgive me."

"Mr. Gunson," I cried, "what is the matter? What has happened? Where's Polly? Tell me, for pity's sake, tell me."

I knew it all in a moment. His silence and the working of his features told me everything. I sank down in a chair and cried like a child. Presently he led me up to the silent room. A lamp was burning beside the bed on which she lay in her white shroud, strewn with flowers as pure and innocent as herself. She was very beautiful still. Death had sadly changed, but had not marred the gentle face, and the faint semblance of a smile seemed yet to hover upon it. But the spirit was gone; the mortal had put on immortality. The dead lips were still, the kind eyes closed for ever. The loving welcome I had dreamed of, hoped for, prayed for, could never be mine. What a miserable delusion appeared the success which had seemed so grand a thing a few minutes before! The wealth I had longed for so ardently, and had attained in so marvellous a manner, crumbled to dust and ashes in the presence of Death.

I knelt beside the bed and buried my face among the flowers. After a short silence the old man spoke in a trembling voice.

"She met with an accident ten days ago. She didn't suffer much, and the end was all but painless. Her faith in you never wavered. She was always sure you would succeed, and just before she died the poor child asked me to give her love to you."

His voice broke, and turning away, he left me alone with her.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 955. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

*By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Concett,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.*

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VII. "THE GODS OF OLD."

"YOU two must go to the Pantheon alone. My eyes are troublesome again. Besides, I have some letters to dictate to Bari. I can't put them off any longer."

It was Neale Kenyon who spoke; lounging, as was his wont, on one of the low, velvet seats in the reading-room of the Europa. Adrian Lyle had just entered. He had breakfasted early and been to the Church of the Jesuits, and now looked in to learn the arrangements of the day.

Gretchen was drawing on her gloves. Her bright face was a little clouded.

"You are getting very lazy, Neale," she said, in her quaint English. "But if we let you off this morning, you must come to the Borghese Villa this afternoon."

"Agreed," laughed Kenyon. "What an indefatigable sight-seer you are, my child! Now be off and grope about your favourite old mouldy streets. There are plenty round about the Pantheon. I think I walked round and round it some half-dozen times once, without finding it."

Another moment and Adrian Lyle was walking down the Corso with his fair young charge.

Girls in the picturesque dress of the Campagna were at every corner with their flower-baskets; the long street was gay and full of people; the shops glittered in the sunlight; a company of "bersaglieri" with streaming plumes were marching by; drums were beating, flags flying, beggars whining, priests in strange garbs, and monks of many Orders flitting along over

the rough paving stones, or lounging beside the church doors, or chattering in groups at the corners; and amidst all, the inevitable tramcars were passing and re-passing on their way to the Piazza di Venezia.

"How gay and bright it all is!" exclaimed Gretchen involuntarily. "Nothing old or mouldy here, is there, Mr. Lyle?"

"No," he answered. "What a picture of life and colour some of these Roman streets are! No wonder artists rave about them; the confused and heterogeneous mass of hues—costumes, faces, garbs! Where would one see the like again? Have you noticed yet what an infinitude of religious Orders there seems to be, judging from their dress? I have quite given up trying to count them."

"Italy seems a land made up of religion," said Gretchen.

"Or, rather, an incessant representation of religion," answered Adrian Lyle, quickly. "The corrupt and bigoted deification of superstition—not faith. Think of these poor, ignorant, groping souls seeking for spiritual good, and receiving only a multitude of prayers, and penances, and penalties, and external forms! Think of spirits trying to soar above the doctrines of priestcraft, and hampered with the dead weight of earthly intervention and direction! As well bid the material eye look through a painted window for the glory of celestial sunlight as lead the soul to shrines, and saints, and symbols, for its glimpses of Heaven. Would to Heaven that one could make them hear or believe that there is but one dome of truth, and that neither priestly voice nor carnal dictates can bar the way thither! I often think men would do better if, instead of preaching to savages and pagans, they would raise their voices against the mass of

superstition and false creeds which have desecrated the simple purity of Christianity."

"And yet," said Gretchen timidly, "the Catholic religion has a great fascination. It promises help in our helplessness, aid in our need, direction in our doubts."

"It is an engine that has been worked by the most skilful of brains, into which an exhaustless patience has been thrown as motive power—an engine that should be fitted and adapted, as you say, to suit the needs and desires of most hearts. Yet it has failed to do so. The fault lies, not with the machinery, but with those who work it."

He stopped for a moment to buy some roses from a little dark-eyed Italian boy, who had been following them perseveringly down the street.

"Will you have them?" he asked his companion shyly.

It was something altogether new to him to offer these little attentions to a woman.

"Thank you," said Gretchen eagerly. "How lovely they are! To think of having roses so early in the year!"

She fastened them in her dress, all save one little bud, which she handed to him:

"You must at least share your gifts," she said; "I feel as if I had robbed you."

He took it from her hand, and placed it in the button-hole of his coat.

"I fear I look even more unclerical than my wont," he said. "But I have an excuse now. We must dip into something more unfragrant and dreary in the way of streets. This is a short cut to the Piazza della Rotonda, and that is our destination. Have I told you that the Pantheon is the only really ancient edifice in Rome in perfect preservation? The decorations have, of course, been replaced, but the building itself has remained intact."

"And is it very, very old?"

"It dates from twenty-seven years before Christ. It was a Pagan temple once, and you will see the very niches that used to contain the statues of the heathen deities."

"Ah! Rome is wonderful," she said below her breath; and then they walked on in silence through the cross lane which led them to Lunglio's Fountain, and across the busy Piazza, on the south side of which stands that great stately circle the like of which the world does not hold. Its beauty has decayed; its coffered ceiling has been robbed; its marbles and porticoes are discoloured; it bears on every side the marks of those rough and warring ages that

have desecrated its sacred glories; but it stands calm and immovable amidst the signs of time, with the eye of Heaven looking through its open dome like a silent witness of men's worship, and men's follies.

"How much one has heard of that open dome!" said Adrian Lyle, as he stood beside Gretchen, and looked up at the blue sky, forming its own roof to this strange temple. "It is a beautiful idea—is it not? To kneel here and see the eye of Heaven bent upon your worship; to watch the rain-clouds drop their tearful tribute, and the fleecy vapours sweep across that space of blue, like white doves' wings, that carry prayers to Heaven—truly this is a place where one might worship without thought of man's ministrations. Perhaps the ancients were wiser than we! Think of them labouring, dreaming, training, worshipping under the pure heavens, in the pure air, and then look at us—their followers—the outcome of a modern civilisation!"

"Only," said Gretchen softly, as his eyes turned to the niches once sacred to Venus and Mars, to Apollo, to the sacred Huntress of the Woods, or later, to the great Cæsar himself; "only theirs was a false worship, so you said."

"Perhaps not more false than many a one the world still owns," he answered bitterly. "We call our gods by other names, but we lay our hearts at their feet just the same. We are very weak, and very untrustworthy creatures, even at our best."

"I should not think you were weak," said Gretchen simply, as she turned here to his face—a face with grand lines, and lustrous eyes, and lit by noble and unselfish purpose: a face to be remembered long, long after the mere colouring or outline of a far handsomer one had faded from her memory.

"I!—" he started and coloured. "Indeed you mistake: I am weak, very weak. Do not fall into the common error of supposing that my profession puts me beyond the pale of ordinary humanity. It does nothing of the sort. The priesthood may elevate the soul, but the grosser clothing of the body weights it just as heavily as if no such priesthood existed. Try as we may, the best of us cannot get rid of the trammels of the body, until age or death has chilled the blood and set the throbbing pulses at rest for evermore."

He turned and moved slowly on towards the high altar. Tapers were burning there in the solemn gloom; the

faint odour of incense still floated, mist-like above the golden cross; around, in a mighty circle, lay the tombs of the mighty dead. Gretchen followed; but as her eyes caught the sacred symbol, the force of habit, or some stronger feeling, overcame her; she sank down on her knees and bowed her head in reverent silence. Adrian Lyle watched her. So young, so fair, so child-like—fit emblem indeed of that holy womanhood shrined in Raphael's heart, and sacred to his genius, here, where his memory is immortalised and his mighty spirit laid to rest!

She rose at last and turned to him; her eyes humid and her cheeks flushed, her lips tremulous with emotion.

"I am so happy," she said; "and when one is happy it is surely right to give thanks for it every hour one lives, for, otherwise indeed, Heaven might deem us ungrateful."

"You are right," said Adrian Lyle, almost humbly. "But few, indeed know how to receive happiness in your spirit. We take it as our right, even as we resent sorrow as an injustice. The Heaven who deals both may well call us thankless."

"You see," she went on as she walked by his side to where those two brief lines form the noblest epitaph to the noblest genius Fame has ever crowned—"when one has had sunshine all one's life one scarcely heeds it; but when the sunshine breaks suddenly over a long, long gloom, how one loves it, and wonders at it, and prizes it. That is how I feel since I have been so happy."

"You were not happy, then," he said hesitatingly, "before—before you met Kenyon?"

"Oh, no," and a look almost of terror came into the clear, deep eyes. "No one loved me, no one wanted me. I was always lonely, and often very, very sad."

"Then, why did they wish to prevent your marriage?" he asked suddenly.

"They did not like the English," she answered, "and Neale is English; and then, as I told you before, they had promised me to the Convent."

"And you ran away," said Adrian Lyle, mechanically.

He was threading the mazes of the old doubt, here in this strange sanctuary, before those sacred and sainted shrines, as he had done before on the blue waters of Venice, and amidst the dusky streets of Rome.

"Yes," she answered; "I ran away."

"Where were you married?" he asked, pausing suddenly and looking straight at the sweet child-face and candid eyes; but his lips paled and his hand trembled as he asked.

Her face neither paled nor flushed beneath that sudden, sharp scrutiny.

"We went to Vienna," she said simply. "We were married there by a priest."

"In a church?" asked Adrian Lyle.

"No; in a room."

"But Kenyon is not of your country or religion," he cried stormily; then paused as he saw the wonder in her face.

"What does that matter?" she said. "Love, such love as ours—that is a real marriage, so, Neale always says, more sure and sacred than a thousand laws could make it."

"My innocent child"—it was almost a groan that escaped Adrian Lyle's lips, seeing how that one doubt had sprung into a hydra-headed monster, with fangs that fastened close and sharp upon his very heart. He could not wake her from her trance of peace and happiness; he could not thrust the cruelty of shame and worldly reasoning into this pure paradise of dreams; he could not say to her—"your marriage is a mockery, and your lover knows it." No, not one or any of those things could he do, and yet he knew that somewhere, close at hand, lay a duty sharp and terrible; a duty that laid claim to his honour as a man, his function as a priest. He had solved his doubt; he had set it at rest, for the certainty of—what? Such pain, such horror, such suffering, as never yet had touched his life, save in the impersonal shadow of others' woes—woes that had laid claim to his ministry, his patience, his compassion, but never to his own actual participation.

The steady inner light of the man's own lofty standard of morality burned clear and bright before him now. For him there were but two paths to follow—the right or the wrong; two paths which he had ever set before the erring and the weak; and these two faced him now with their signal-posts of doom on the one hand, of suffering and sorrow on the other. Could he bid these young feet stray on towards the frowning precipice, heedless and blind? Or could he stay them with sharp and sudden warning that should hurl all joy and peace of life aside, and show what lay beyond the brightness and beauty of the flower-strewn path?

He turned aside—he moved away with

hurried steps to where that calm pure eye of Heaven looked down through the open roof. It was veiled and darkened now. Thick banks of cloud had gathered overhead, the sharp patter of rain-drops fell upon the dome, and some touched his face like tears that consecrated the baptism of sorrow.

At that instant, timidly as a child might have crept, she crept to his side; innocently as a child might have touched, she touched his hand. "Why have you gone away?" she said; "have I said anything to offend you?"

The look, the touch, the voice tried to the utmost his self-control—sweeping out of his mind the purer aspirations, the indefinite character of feelings, which his heart alone should have known. All that there was in him of manhood—manhood unaroused, untouched as yet by the rapture of a woman's presence—sprang to life as flame from fire, and he trembled like a leaf as his eyes sank before her own.

"Offended me—no," he said almost roughly. "Only—only" and he broke off abruptly. His rapid glance took in the solitude of the great temple. Not a creature was there but an old cripple, kneeling at one of the side altars—deaf and blind to all but her own devotions.

"Tell me, child," he said quickly, "you have said you are happy—happy in every hour you live. Can you imagine that there could be for you any joy in life that showed you a duty too stern and severe for happiness; that parted you from love; that was all renunciation and suffering and struggling, with but one reward at last—Heaven?"

"You speak as the priests used to speak," she said, looking up at him with an awed and paling face. "You, preach too, their doctrines of renunciation—self-sacrifice—joylessness—oh no, no, Mr. Lyle, I could not bear that. I could not, indeed. I am not good, I know; but oh, do let me be a little happy while I may! You cannot mean that I should give up what I have only just found. Oh! no, no. I have vowed myself—given myself—I cannot undo what is done. I cannot live if you tell me I must go back to the darkness and gloom—the loneliness and pain."

Her eyes dilated, her breath came quick and fast, she faced him there beneath the eye of Heaven, with the tears of Heaven falling on her brow. "What do you mean!" she said, and her voice shook. "You look so pale and stern; you frighten me."

The innocent words smote him like a blow. With a terrible effort he recovered himself:

"Frighten you? Heaven forgive me," he muttered, and passed his hand across his eyes as if to shut out some painful vision. "My child," and his voice grew sweet and tender like some strange strain of music to her ear, "go your way; be happy while you can. It is the greatest gift the gods bestowed on mortals; it is the greatest gift that our God holds as his, Heaven knows. I should be little better than a murderer to slay before you what your heart cherishes as its life—aye, dearer than its life. A great love is pure, let the world say what it will. Only"—and his voice grew stern, and his eye flashed as it met the wonder and the fear of hers—"only, I feel as if I ought to give you one word of warning. Others have loved like you, trusted like you, yet have found love a false idol."

"And you think," she said slowly, "that I might find that also?"

"I hardly know what I think," he said bitterly, "save that life is not the garden of roses you imagine it . . . and I have told you no one—no one—ever treads its paths without suffering or without pain."

"I can bear it," she said softly, "so long as he loves me. I can never be alone, and never unhappy, while I have him."

Adrian Lyle was silent, too deeply moved for speech. Yet a voice seemed to whisper in his ear: "You are shirking duty. How do you know that this soul may not be required at your hands; that for sake of a moment's pitiful weakness you may not be called to account in that dread Hereafter, of which you speak so confidently to others?"

And while the torment and the doubt still held him silent, a sudden little rift came in the darkened clouds; through the vaulted dome there sped a tiny shaft of sunlight, and touched the bright head and troubled, serious eyes of Gretchen.

He saw it, and she saw it, and their eyes met, and the gloom faded from his own.

"It is an omen," he said. "The sunshine has dispelled fear. Let us accept it."

He stretched out his hand, and she took it, and stood there looking up at his face trustfully as a child who seeks instruction.

"Will you always be my friend?" she said. "I feel so safe and strong when with you. But perhaps"—as she saw a slight change in his face—"I ought not to

ask that. We must part. And how could I expect you to remember me?"

"I shall always do that," he said very gently—"always. And as for being your friend, if it depended on myself I should only too readily assent; but your—husband—does not like me; and perhaps one day he will like me still less. I have that to say which must be said ere I can sleep in peace. No; do not look so disturbed. I will not quarrel, I promise you."

"I do not understand," she faltered, and the colour left her cheek in sudden fear.

"There is no need," said Adrian Lyle. "You have called me your friend. I will do you at least one service for honour of the name; and then——"

"Then?" she questioned, as her hands dropped from his unconscious hold.

"Then," he said, with an effort at gaiety, "we will go our separate ways on the journey of life, and I will wish you God-speed. But," he added solemnly, "if at any time—in any time of trouble, sorrow, need—you wish for me, or feel that my presence can in any way dispel a difficulty, clear a doubt, or soothe an hour of suffering, you need but speak a word and I will come to your side; and all that lies in man's power to do for a fellow mortal I will do for you."

"Thank you," she said, very low, but with an earnestness solemn as his own; "I will remember."

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

ROSS AND CROMARTY.

Ross was the land of the Mackenzies—the most numerous and powerful of all the Highland clans—and the county still remains the most purely Gaelic in its population. The eastern part, indeed, contains a strong contingent of Lowlanders; but the hills, the glens, and the shores of the innumerable lochs, where they have any inhabitants at all, are occupied by a Gaelic-speaking race. As for Cromarty, it is so completely mixed up with Ross, that no one attempts to treat it as a separate county. The little patches of Cromarty, which are sown up and down the rugged expanse of Ross, bear, no doubt, their testimony to the existence of some Celtic Principality, the memory of which is otherwise lost. There is, however, a strong flavour of originality about the town of Cromarty, as it lies on the extremity of

the peninsula, shaped like a spear-head, which is almost enclosed in the deeply-recessed fiords about it. There is no other such curious indentation along the whole eastern coast of Britain as that formed by the winding arms of the giant Firth of Moray; and wild and strange is the aspect of Cromarty, with the brown precipices that bridge round the coast, where, in stormy weather, the breakers dash upwards in masses of foam a hundred feet or more in height; and the strange eminences to north and south, known as the Sutors, or Cobblers, of Cromarty. At the extreme point of the headland a lighthouse flashes forth its cheerful ray, visible for thirteen miles at sea, a beacon of safety to the storm-tossed mariner—for the Bay of Cromarty, to the north of the town, is the safest and most commodious roadstead on the coast: the only one of its kind, indeed, among these capes of storms and shipwrecks.

The entire peninsula of Cromarty was a Lowland settlement, ruled, for the most part, by the Urquharts, whose feudal stronghold rose behind the old town. It is a town which has known many vicissitudes, now rising to comparative importance, again almost deserted, with half its houses falling to ruins, but with a tough vitality about it that preserves it from utter decay. And this tough vitality is shared by the inhabitants of the district. Nowhere are there so many old people, active and cheerful in the extremity of age. Hugh Millar, one of the illustrious children of Cromarty, speaks of a woman still alive in the forties of the present century, who remembered hearing the cannon from Culloden, and described the general terror at the sound—so ominous and dreadful as it rumbled over the placid Firth and echoed among the cliffs. Notable, too, were the people for a certain hardy thrift that distinguished them from their Highland neighbours. A Cromarty fire is one that is spark out; and there is an old joke about the key of the peat-chest which a Cromarty farmer entrusted to his daughter, with injunctions to bring out a turf and a half, and make up a good fire. More than once the peninsula was ravaged and pillaged by the Highland clans, and the claims for compensation, in the reign of James the Fourth, consequent upon a general raid, show the wealth of the community in cattle and general plenishing.

A strong-headed, clever family were the

Urquharts of Cromarty, of whose castle, by the town, only the green mound now remains. In the days of the civil wars the head of the family was Sir Thomas Urquhart, a whimsical genius, who, in his solitary tower at Cromarty, devoted his days to study and research. A voluminous writer was Sir Thomas, although only a small proportion of his works were ever published. He translated Rabelais as a relaxation from his severer studies; and as a first step towards the diffusion of his philosophy through the world in general, he invented a universal language, which might have been the model, it is said, for the chemical notation now in use. But Sir Thomas was also a warrior, and, like a loyal Knight, when his King—Charles the Second—recently crowned at Scone, demanded his services, he followed him on his English expedition, carrying, among his other heavy baggage, three huge trunks crammed with manuscripts, the corpus of a hundred works, written, or at all events planned, by Sir Thomas, on almost every branch of human knowledge. When the loyal Knight sallied forth to Worcester fight, he left his trunks of manuscripts in his lodgings in the city. Sir Thomas was taken prisoner and hurried away to the Tower, and Cromwell's victorious soldiers pillaged the lodgings of the Royal officers at their leisure. Sir Thomas's precious trunks were rifled, and the manuscripts were tumbled into the gutter, or served to light the pipes of the Roundhead soldiery. A few of the manuscripts fell into careful hands, and were eventually restored to Sir Thomas. One of the lost manuscripts, it is hinted, contained a description of the first germ of the steam engine; and it is suggested that, if we may conjecture this particular document to have fallen into the hands of the Marquis of Worcester, the claim of that nobleman to be one of the originators of that great invention, might fairly be transferred to the Chief of Cromarty—but there is great virtue in an "if."

Our sorrow for the hitherto unrecognised result of Cromwell's crowning mercy may be mitigated by the reflection that Sir Thomas's researches seem all to have led to one general conclusion, namely, that he himself and the Urquharts were the head of the family of Japhet, the outcome of the wisdom and prophecy of all the ages past.

Long known in the folk-lore of seamen—a strange and curious lore in which the traditions of Arabs, Greeks, Scandinavians,

and, indeed, of all seafaring races, seem to be mingled—was the Diamond Rock of Cromarty, a patch of rock upon the south Sutor, which was said to glow at night with mystic radiance, in a clear, beacon-like flame, which shipmen, passing from foreign parts concluded must mark the shrine of a saint, or the cell of some holy hermit. In the daytime nothing to account for this brilliance could be seen, and many ineffectual attempts were made to hit upon the exact spot which contained this marvellous talisman. At last an English Captain—it is always these gross-minded English Captains who break these delicate cobwebs of fairy spells—an English Captain incubated the notion of definitely fixing the position of the Diamond Rock. He was a Cinque Ports man, no doubt from the coast whose white cliffs suggested the germ of the plan and the means of its execution. The Captain had caused to be fashioned sundry cannon-balls of chalk, and coming to the rock at night he opened fire upon the mystic, lambent flame. But the spirits will not be bombarded in such rude fashion, and at the first discharge the light disappeared, and it is said has never more been seen.

Many other traditions of Cromarty were collected and recorded by Hugh Millar, who, to his scientific distinction, added a sympathetic love for the popular mythology of his native district. Much of this is the common property of the race to which we belong; but here is a story with peculiar features, which throws a light akin to that from the Diamond Rock, but is not to be despised on that account, upon the origin of those archæological puzzles—the vitrified forts of Scotland.

Such a fort—and a very fine example of the kind—stands on the summit of Knockferril, in Cromarty. It was once occupied by a giant tribe of Fions, who had built the fort for the security of their wives and children; for the Fions lived by hunting, and it was the duty and privilege of every grown man of the tribe to follow the chase wherever it might lead. There is no mention in the legend, by the way, of old people, and we may conclude either that the Fions never grew old, or that they were driven by the stern laws of necessity to put away those who had become useless members of the community.

One of the youths of the tribe, who bore the sobriquet of Garry, was always a laggard in the chase. He was almost a dwarf—hardly fifteen feet high—deformed

and incapable of speed, although vast strength resided in his sinewy arms. Among a colony of smiths he would have been King; but here he was only an object of derision, the butt of the whole community, and especially of the women. One day the hunt was carried far afield, and Garry fell behind as usual, and, weary and dissatisfied, returned to Knockferriil, and fell asleep on one of its grassy slopes. Here he was discovered by one of the women from the fort, who brought out the whole sisterhood to laugh at the sleeping lout. The youth's long hair spread out upon the turf suggested to the mocking women a cruel trick. They fastened his luxuriant locks by innumerable pegs to the grass, and retired to a convenient distance to arouse him at their leisure with a shower of sticks and stones. The struggles of the youth as, tethered by the head, he strove in vain to arise, were greeted with shouts of cruel laughter by women and children. Furious with passion, Garry exerted his great strength and wrenched his head from the ground, leaving half his hair and a portion of his scalp upon the grass. Then the whole shrieking tribe rushed in dismay to the fort, pursued by Garry, now maddened by rage and pain. The door was barred against him, but Garry, seizing live embers from the fires that were burning around, set light to the wooden roof of the enclosure. Flames soon roared on high, and the wretched inmates rushed to the entrance and struggled in vain to escape. For Garry held the door against them, held it against the maddened pressure of the crowd within, till ere long screams and prayers were no longer heard, and silence was broken only by the roar of the furnace heat within. Then the miserable Garry turned and fled.

The Fions were hunting on the hill of Nigg, far away on the other side of the Firth, when they saw a vast column of black smoke rising from the direction of their homes. With fear at their hearts they strode back over hill and dale, leaping the Firth with the aid of their long hunting poles, but when they reached their fort on Knockferriil, there was nothing left of their homes and dear ones, but a heap of glowing embers in the midst of a fiery furnace; the heat of which had fused the Cyclopean stones and covered them with the vitreous glaze which still bears witness to the tragedy of the Fions. But Garry they pursued by the tracks he had left in his flight, overtook him in

Glengarry, which still bears his name, and tore him limb from limb. But the catastrophe was fatal to the Fions. None were left to perpetuate their race; and though they continued for a while to hunt among the hills, yet, lonely and despairing, they died one after another, and left no vestiges of their existence, except the grassy fort on Knockferriil.

On the same peninsula of Cromarty lies Fortrose, one of the earliest points d'appui of the Scottish Kings, in the land of the Gael: now a pleasant little watering-place, with the ruins of its Cathedral, ancient but small, upon a neighbouring heath. There is Ferintosh too, or Farintosh, which Thackeray raised to a Marquisate in the "New-comes," but which had really curious privileges and immunities connected with its early Celtic *toisach*—such as an immunity from the visits of the exciseman—which continued down to the year 1786, when the Government bought up the right of the free distilling of whiskey for twenty thousand pounds. This particular privilege indeed is said to have been granted to Forbes, of Culloden, for his services to the Hanoverian dynasty in the '45; but the privileges of Ferintosh were in reality far more ancient, and the grant was only a confirmation of what in practice already existed. Officially, indeed, it must be noted that Ferintosh belongs to the county of Nairn, but it seems more natural to treat it according to its local position.

Dingwall, again, is in Ross, although on the shore of the Firth of Cromarty, an altogether charming nook, surrounded by rich fertility, such as puts to flight all preconceived notions of the barren North. Close by is Strathpeffer, with its mineral springs, like a German bath town among the hills; and Castle Leod, an ancient seat of the Mackenzies, built by one Sir Roderick in the sixteenth century, altogether quaint and wonderful in its storied height, its turrets, its many windows, and grizzled walls, surrounded by rich grass lands on the flank of a round-topped hill. Close by is a stone which records an exploit of the Munroes, who carried off a Lady of Seaforth, together with the house she lived in—wattle and dab—upon their shoulders. The Mackenzies pursued and rescued their Lady, inflicting terrible loss among the Munroes, who afterwards, so says tradition, raised the stone alluded to in memory of their dead. The Lady of Seaforth is now the Duchess of Sutherland, and we may

appraise the changes that time has wrought if we picture anyone trying to carry off Her Grace's house in such a rough-and-ready way.

Another Lady of Seaforth is chronicled by Sir Bernard Burke; the Lady whose Lord stayed so long in Paris, and who caused the family seer, the famous Kenneth Oure, to show her in the magic bowl what my Lord was about just then. The sight of her husband's gay doings so enraged the Lady of Seaforth that the too faithful seer was hanged there and then by her Ladyship's command, leaving behind him a malediction which seems curiously to have been worked out.

The lonely coasts of Cromarty Firth are now threaded by the Highland Railway, and a station at Tain, otherwise Baile Dhuthaich, gives ready access to the shrine of Duthac, to which Scottish Kings were wont to make long and laborious pilgrimages. St. Duthac, according to the authorities, was born at Tain in the eleventh century, and the ruined chapel, built of rude granite blocks, is said to be the actual site of his birthplace. Duthac went to Ireland, then the seat of learning and island of the saints, and died at Armagh, A.D. 1065. The fame of his sanctity reached his native town, and a couple of centuries after his death his remains were translated to Tain with due honour. Tain became known as a free town under the direct protection of the Holy See, and the girth about St. Duthac's shrine formed one of the most hallowed sanctuaries of the Northern kingdom. To St. Duthac's fled the wife and daughter of Robert Bruce, when the shelter they had found in Kildrummie Castle proved untenable.

Throw Ross right to the girth of Tane,
But that travel they mad in vane.

For the long arm of King Edward reached the fugitives even here. The Earl of Ross was induced to break the sanctuary, and to hand over the fugitives to the English King.

Again the sanctuary was broken by Macneil of Creich, who, pursuing his foes into the very chapel of St. Duthac, seems to have had scruples as to violating the sanctity of the altar, but, by way of a compromise, burnt the roof over their heads, and effectually disposed of them. For this deed, however, he was executed by King James the First, not so much for the murder as the sacrilege. Political refugees found a safer asylum within the girth of Tain, and William Lord Creighton, in

trouble during the reign of James the Third, lived at Tain, in sanctuary, for several years without molestation. But James the Fourth was the great patron of St. Duthac. Whether it was that the saint in early life had behaved badly to his father, and had lived to repent, and that the King thus hoped for favourable regard for his own penitence, is only a matter of surmise, for a complete history of the private life of St. Duthac has escaped our researches; but for some reason or other, perhaps because the way was long and difficult, and the place as far removed as possible from his other favourite shrine of St. Ninian's, in Galloway—anyhow, whatever the cause, King James for twenty years never failed to visit St. Duthac's at least once a year. He was there in the very year of Flodden, and the English ballad writers who celebrated that eventful day, did not forget to reproach the Scotch and their King with their devotion to "Doffin, their demi-god of Ross."

James the Fifth set himself to walk barefooted to the shrine, at all events part of the way, and a footpath over a bog still bears the name of the King's path, and certainly the route seems the most convenient for a barefooted procession.

The shrine of St. Duthac went down in the days of the Scottish Reformation, without much being heard of it. Stray pilgrims from the Highlands continued to visit it for long after; and, even now, the ground about the old chapels of the saint is in high esteem for burials. But there is nothing in the more modern history of Tain that rises above the general level.

A somewhat dead and desert level, indeed, here forms the neck of Scotland, and you may pass from one side of the kingdom to the other without meeting anything, save perhaps an old woman, or a donkey with a load of peat. Nor, indeed, is there anything remarkable, as far as we know, connected with Ullapool and Loch Broom, apart from the general history of the district, although the name of the Summer Isles calls forth pictures of halcyon nests floating among warm and placid seas, that the reality scarcely justifies. But for an example of a kirk minister among the Highlands, we may call up the memory of James Robertson, of Loch Broom, meaning the districts round about the loch, for on this western coast it is the fashion to call the land after the water, the latter being often the most fertile and profitable part of the human heritage.

James Robertson began life almost simultaneously with the eighteenth century, having been born in 1701; and, no doubt, passed with credit through his probationary stages to the settled ministry. He soon became known to his parishioners as the powerful minister, not so much for his sermons and exhortations, although these were no doubt of the best, as for his personal qualities, his strength and athletic habits, all calculated to earn and maintain the respect of the rude Highlanders about him. On one occasion he was officiating for a friend at Fearn, when the roof of the church fell in, and the whole fabric became a wreck; the lintel of the doorway was giving way under the pressure, threatening to cut off the retreat of the congregation, when Robertson, like another Samson, took the end of the stone upon his shoulder and supported that part of the fabric till his friends had escaped. On another occasion, a little misunderstanding with some of his flock, was rectified by the minister's personal gifts. The misunderstanding began in this way. One Donald Mackenzie had a child whom he naturally wished to have baptized. In the practice of the Scotch Church, it is the parent who is catechised as to his religious knowledge. Donald proved to be grossly ignorant, and was referred to his studies. The Highlander brooded over the matter, and made up his mind that the minister should baptize his child, whether he would or no. He persuaded another Mackenzie to help him in the enterprise, and, with the child, they waylaid the minister and insisted on his performing the office. The minister refused, the Highlanders persisted; a scuffle began, and the Highlanders were getting so decidedly the worst of it, that Donald in a fury drew his dirk, and slashed the minister over the arm. But in spite of his wound the minister gave the pair a beating, and sent Donald home to study his Catechism again.

When Robertson heard that the Prince had landed in the '45, he found the greater part of his flock making ready to join him. As a minister he was naturally strong for the Protestant succession, and did all he could to persuade his flock to remain quietly at home. All was of no use, and for many months, and during the early successes of the Prince, Robertson's position was of some danger, as he was looked upon by many of his neighbours as no better than a Government spy. As it happened, he had it in his power to do the Hanoverian party some service.

Few men had done more harm to the Prince's cause than Forbes, of Culloiden, as, by his influence among the Highland chiefs, he had caused many of them to remain neutral. He was still working hard for the side which he shrewdly judged the stronger, when the Jacobites made an attempt to seize him. Culloiden House was surrounded, and Forbes owed his escape to the timely warning of a Highlander, whom, in his former capacity of advocate, he had saved from the gallows. A great dinner, or supper rather, was fixed for the evening on which the Jacobites had proposed to appear as uninvited guests. All the preparations went on, the house was brilliantly illuminated, the pipers played in the courtyard. But in the meantime Forbes and his friend Lord Loudon had quietly stolen away. The only place of safety they could reach was in Sutherland, and the only way open was through the heart of the Highland country, which was most bitterly hostile. But thanks to Robertson, with whom they managed to communicate, they and their followers were safely passed through the most dangerous districts; and presently the victory, or disaster, of Culloiden—so much depends on the point of view from which one looks at such things—put them entirely at their ease. In gratitude for Robertson's services, Forbes and his friend introduced him to the victor of Culloiden, with many flattering encomiums. The Duke was most affable. You might have thought the minister's fortune was made. With the happy tact and gracious consideration that distinguished his family, His Highness presented the poor minister with twelve stands of arms, to be distributed among his well-thinking friends!

But the minister now had played his part of Loyalist. Henceforth he was to be the friend of the poor misguided members of his flock, who were lying in prison in London, far away from home, and friends, and from any kindly hand, awaiting the tender mercies of the law. The good man travelled seven hundred miles, by rugged and dangerous ways, and reached London just in time to hear one of his parishioners, Hector Mackenzie, condemned to death. His services to the Crown had given him a right to intercede for its victims. He left no stone unturned, and at last got a promise from the Duke of Newcastle, that his friend's life should be spared. But he was told that the Duke's promises were sometimes forgotten, and, finding that no reprieve arrived, he fought his way once more

through ante-chambers and secretaries to the Duke's presence. The Duke confirmed his promise, and affably offered his hand. There was no danger of his forgetting any more, as Robertson grasped the proffered hand in his awful fist, and wrung it in all the strength of his gratitude and devotion.

"You shall have him! you shall have him!" cried the poor Duke, with tears in his voice and in his eyes.

Then Mr. Robertson offered himself as Gaelic interpreter for the trials then pending, and thus was able practically to act as advocate for the poor prisoners who knew no English, as well as to give a dexterous and favourable turn to such evidence as was proffered in the vernacular.

Soon after, when his merciful mission was nearly ended, and he was about to return home, he happened to be crossing the Thames in a wherry, when he heard a doleful voice address him, in Gaelic, from a prison hulk upon the river:

"Oh, Master James, Master James, are you going to leave me here?"

It was Donald's voice—the Mackenzie who had shown such animosity about the baptism.

"Ah, Donald, Donald!" replied the minister, in the same language, "do you remember the day of the dirk?"

Still more plaintively came the reply:

"Ah, Mr. James, this is a bad place to remember in."

The minister, it is pleasant to know, succeeded in obtaining the liberation of his old assailant, who was about to be shipped to the plantations.

The chief stronghold of the Mackenzies, so long the dominant clan in Ross, was the Castle of Eilan Donan, on an island in the entrance to Loch Duich, still an imposing ruin, and inhabited up to 1719, when it was partly destroyed by the guns of an English man-of-war. And this attack upon Eilan Donan is connected with an almost forgotten episode of the struggles of the Jacobites for the restoration of their Prince.

The affair was a small one, and yet it was the outcome of a strong and formidable league, which really, for the moment, made the throne of King George unsteady. Charles the Twelfth of Sweden had been in it, who hated George from the bottom of his heart. He had himself designed, perhaps, to lead the expedition, but he had been killed the year before. The Czar Peter had joined the plot, and Alberoni also, on behalf of the Spanish kingdom.

A fleet and army were to be launched upon England—a second Spanish Armada.

Again the boisterous gales favoured the island. The invading squadron was dispersed in the Bay of Biscay, and two frigates alone, with some four hundred Spanish soldiers on board, sailed into the appointed meeting-place on Loch Alsh.

According to the restricted plan adopted, the forfeited Earl of Seaforth, the head of all the Mackenzies, was to raise his clan and protect the landing of the army. The Mackenzies would not rise; but the Macraes obeyed the signal of their chief. The clans were ready enough, but the army had dwindled woefully to four hundred men; and a far superior force of Royal troops was in the neighbourhood. The decisive battle—for battle there was—came off in Glenshiel. Rob Roy, it is said, was among the combatants. His business was to attack the Hanoverians in the rear, when they were engaged in front with the main body. But Rob attacked too soon, and was beaten off before the others began. The Spaniards were surprised, and laid down their arms in a body, and the Highlanders, after defending their breastwork gallantly for some time, concluded that the battle was lost, and vanished among the mists.

The attachment of the clansmen for their chief was shown in the case of the Mackenzies, in a very emphatic fashion. The Commissioners of Forfeited Estates appointed one Mr. Ross, a gentleman of the neighbourhood, to collect the rents of the Seaforth estates. As he rode out to his rent audit at Strathglass, Mr. Ross, with peculiar prudence, changed horses with his son, and sent the young man on in front to reconnoitre. The tenants were gathered in the glen, and, taking the young man for his father, they discharged their guns in a volley, and the poor victim of paternal solicitude fell lifeless to the ground. The real Simon Pure prudently turned back. But the wonderful part of the business was that the tenants all paid their rents regularly from year to year into the hands of Murchison, of Ouchtertyre, the agent of their banished Lord, who regularly remitted them to the exiles.

My Lord was a man little worthy of such devotion, and repaid his agent's attachment with the basest ingratitude. A descendant of this Murchison was the celebrated geologist, who has erected a monument commemorative of his ancestor's fidelity and its result—a broken heart, which carried

him to the grave—on a green spot overlooking the sound of Kyle Akin, familiar in the route of Mr. MacBrayne's steamers.

The strong attachment of the Mackenzies to their chiefs is all the more remarkable, that in origin these were not Gaels at all or Mackenzies, but an intrusive Norman family, of the race of the faithless Irish Geraldines, who obtained a grant of the district from some Scottish King, who gave away what was certainly not his to bestow. And with their strong castle of Eilan Donan, and the territory of Kintail, defended by its mountain barriers, they soon obtained the homage of the neighbouring clans, and soon in their wise family policy became more Gaelic than the Gaels themselves.

We must give but a flying notice to Applecross, where St. Maebhrubha, from Ireland, founded a convent after the Columban pattern in 673, which subsequently became the seat of an hereditary Abbot—rather an anomalous dignity, but such were the fashions of the Culdees. Then there is Loch Maree, with its four-and-twenty islets; and that particular islet with the spring that restores reason to the insane, and has other mystic properties.

The Danish Prince, too, should be mentioned, and the Irish Princess, whose attendants re-enacted the Grecian legend, and hoisted the black flag instead of the white one, leading the expectant bridegroom to drown himself in the loch. A pleasant legend for a summer's dive among the deep blue waters of the fairy lake!

OSCULATION.

THE subject of this article, as stated above, is osculation; and osculation is—"not to put too fine a point upon it," as Mr. Snagsby would say—kissing. Further definition is, we take it, unnecessary. Kisses, according to Sam Slick, are like creation, because they are made out of nothing, and are very good. Another wag says they are like sermons—they require two heads and an application. An ingenious American grammarian thus conjugates the verb: "Buss, to kiss; rebus, to kiss again; pluribus, to kiss without regard to number; sillybus, to kiss the hand instead of the lips; blunderbus, to kiss the wrong person; omnibus, to kiss every person in the room; erebus, to kiss in the dark." But kissing baffles all at-

tempts at analysis, and Josh Billings is pretty accurate when he says "that the more a man tries to analyse a kiss the more he can't; and that the best way to define a kiss is to take one." Kisses lend themselves readily enough to classification, many and varied as they are, and differing in kind, from the impassioned salute of the lover to the perfunctory kiss bestowed upon the greasy Court Testament. But with such a classification, though interesting enough, we have not here to do; we purpose to treat the subject rather historically than analytically.

The "British Apollo," when asked why kissing was so popular, what its benefit, and who its inventor, replied: "Ah, madam, had you a lover you would not come to Apollo for a solution; since there is no dispute but the kisses of mutual lovers give infinite satisfaction. As to its invention, it is certain that Nature was its author, and it began with the first courtship." It seems difficult to conceive of a time when kissing was unknown in this island, and yet a Scandinavian tradition states that kissing was first introduced into England by Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist. In Edward the Fourth's reign it was usual for a guest, both on his arrival and at his departure, to kiss his hostess and all the ladies of her family. Again, in Henry's time, when Cavendish visited a French nobleman at his own château, the mistress of the house at the head of her maidens thus greeted him: "For as much as ye be an Englishman, whose custom it is in your country to kiss all ladies and gentlewomen without offence, and although it be not so here in this realm, yet will I be so bold as to kiss you, and so shall all my maidens." Erasmus, grave and staid scholar as he was, writes enthusiastically of the practice: "If you go to any place you are received with a kiss by all; if you depart on a journey you are dismissed with a kiss; you return—kisses are exchanged; they come to visit you—a kiss the first thing; they leave you—you kiss them all round. Do they meet you anywhere—kisses in abundance. Lastly, wherever you move, there is nothing but kisses—and if you had but once tasted them! how soft they are! how fragrant! on my honour you would not wish to reside here for ten years only, but for life!"

We find in the time of James the First, that the Constable of Spain bestowed a kiss upon each of Anne of Denmark's maids of honour "according to the custom of the

country, any neglect of which is taken as an affront." Bunyan, the immortal tinker, strongly reprobated the practice which had grown to such lengths, and asked its defenders "why they made baulks? Why they saluted the most handsome, and let the ill-favoured ones go?" In France the custom found great favour, and has lingered to a greater extent than in our country. To an Englishman, full of his insular reserve, there is something unmanly in the way men at a public railway station in France salute each other upon both cheeks; and yet in England itself it was, at one time, the recognised form of salutation, so much so that we find Rustic Sprightly complaining to the Spectator of a courtier who merely contented himself with a courtly bow, instead of kissing the ladies all round upon entering the room. But not only was it usual for a gentleman to kiss a lady, but it was ceremonious for the sterner sex to thus salute each other. In Wesley's Journal, dated June 16th, 1758, we find a remarkable instance of this, in a description of a duel between two officers at Limerick: "Mr. B. proposed firing at twelve yards, but Mr. J. said, 'No, six is enough.' So they kissed one another (poor farce!), and before they were five paces asunder, both fired at the same instant."

Hone, in his quaint old Table-Book, gives an account of a curious kissing festival held in Ireland: "On Easter Monday, several hundred of young persons of the town and neighbourhood of Portaferry, County Down, resort, dressed in their best, to a pleasant walk near the town called 'The Walter.' The avowed object of each person is to see the fun, which consists in the men kissing the females without reserve, whether married or single. This mode of salutation is quite a matter of course; it is never taken amiss, nor with much show of coyness. The female must be ordinary indeed who returns home without having received at least a dozen hearty busses."

Kissing under the mistletoe is a custom of very remote origin, and a practice too common to be dealt with here, though it may not perhaps be known that, owing to the licentious revelry to which it gave occasion, mistletoe was formerly excluded by ecclesiastic order from the decoration of the Church at Christmas-time. Hone tells us that there was an old belief, that unless a maiden was kissed under the mistletoe at Christmas she would not be married during the ensuing year.

In the ceremonial of betrothal a kiss has played an important part in several nations. A nuptial kiss in church, at the conclusion of the marriage service, is solemnly enjoined by the York Missal and the Sarum Manual. In the old play of *The Insensate Countess*, by Marston, occurs the line:

The kisse thou gav'st me in the Church, here take.

It was also considered an honour to be the first to kiss the bride after the ceremony, and all who would might contend for the prize. In *The Collier's Wedding*, by Edward Chicken, we read:

Four rustic fellows wait the while
To kiss the bride at the church stile.

When ladies' lips were at the service of all, it became usual to have fragrant-scented comfits or sweets, of which we find frequent mention. In *Massinger's Very Women* occurs the following:

Faith! search our pockets; and if you find there,
Comfits of amber-grease to help our kisses,
Conclude us faulty.

When kissing was thus a common civility of daily intercourse, it is not to be wondered at that it should find its way into the courtesies of dancing; and thus we learn that "a kiss was, anciently, the established fee of a lady's partner." In a Dialogue between Custom and Veritie, concerning the Use and Abuse of Dancing and Minstrelsie, printed by John Allde, is the following verse:

But some reply, what fool would daunce,
If that, when daunce is doone,
He may not have at ladye's lips
That which in daunce he wooon?

In *The Tempest* this line occurs:

Curtied when you have and kissed.

And Henry says to Anne Boleyn:

Sweetheart,
I were unmannerly to take you out,
And not to kiss you!

While thus quoting Shakespeare, it may not be out of place to give the pretty pleading for a kiss of *Helena* to her boorish, churlish husband:

I am not worthy of the wealth I own;
Nor dare I say 'tis mine; and yet it is;
But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal
What law does vouch mine own.

What would you have?

Something; and scarce so much;—nothing, indeed—

I would not tell you what I would, my lord,—
faith, yes—

Strangers and foes do sunder, and not kiss.

Brand, in his "*Popular Antiquities*," tells us that the custom of kissing in dancing

is still prevalent in many parts of the country. "When the fiddler thinks his young couples have had music enough, he makes his instrument squeak out two notes, which all understand to say, 'Kiss her!'" The author himself has seen at a country "Feast" the panting, bucolic swains claim this privilege from their blushing partners. In the *Spectator* for May the seventeenth, Number Sixty-seven, is the following comment upon a letter communicated: "I must confess, I am afraid that my correspondent had too much reason to be a little out of humour at the treatment of his daughter; but I conclude that he would have been much more so, had he seen one of those kissing dances in which, Will Honeycomb assures me, they are obliged to dwell almost a minute on the Fair one's lips, or they will be too quick for the music, and dance quite out of time."

In Russia the Easter salutation is a kiss. Each member of the family salutes the other; chance acquaintances on meeting kiss; principals kiss their employes; the General kisses his officers; the officers kiss their soldiers; the Czar kisses his family, retinue, court, and attendants, and even his officers on parade, the sentinels at the palace gates, and a select party of private soldiers—probably elaborately prepared for this "royal salute." In other parts the poorest serf, meeting a high-born dame in the street, has but to say "Christ is risen," and he will receive a kiss and the reply "He is risen truly."

In Finland, according to Bayard Taylor, the women resent as an insult a salute upon the lips. A Finnish matron, hearing of our English custom of kissing, declared that did her husband attempt such a liberty, she would treat him to such a box upon the ears that he should not readily forget.

In Iceland illegitimate and illicit kissing had deterrent penalties of great severity. For kissing another man's wife, with or without her consent, the punishment of exclusion or its pecuniary equivalent was awarded. A man rendered himself liable for kissing an unmarried woman under legal guardianship without her consent; and even if the lady consented, the law required that every kiss should be wiped out by a fine of three marks, equivalent to one hundred and forty ells of wadmal, a quantity, we are told, sufficient to furnish a whole ship's crew with pilot jackets. Truly such kisses were expensive luxuries.

The code of Justinian says "that if a man betrothed a woman by the kiss, and either party died before marriage, the heirs were entitled to half the donations, and the survivor to the other half; but if the contract was made without the solemn kiss, the whole of the espousal gifts must be restored to the donors and their heirs-at-law."

Kissing in many religions has played its part as a mark of adoration or veneration. In Hosea xiii. 2, speaking of idolatry, we find the sentence: "Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves." Again, the discontented prophet is told that even in idolatrous Israel there are seven thousand knees which have not bowed to Baal, "and every mouth which hath not kissed him." The Mohammedans, on their pious pilgrimage to Mecca, kiss the sacred black stone and the four corners of the Kaaba. The Romish priest kisses the aspergillum, and on Palm Sunday the palm. Kissing the Pope's toe was a fashion introduced by one of the Leos, who had mutilated his right hand and was too vain to expose the stump.

Kisses have been the reward of genius, as when Voltaire was publicly kissed in the stage-box by the young and lovely Duchesse de Villars, who was ordered by an enthusiastic pit thus to reward the author of *Merope*. In politics they have been used as bribes, as in the famous Eatanswill election of the "*Pickwick Papers*," and also in a still more famous election. For when Fox was contesting the hard-won seat at Westminster, the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire offered to kiss all who voted for the great statesman. And fully as famous, and perhaps in a better cause, was the self-denying patriotism of the beautiful Lady Gordon, who, when the ranks of the Scottish regiments had been sadly thinned by cruel Badajoz and Salamanca, turned recruiting sergeant, and to tempt the gallant lads placed the recruiting shilling in her lips, from whence who would might take it with his own.

Kisses in our own day have their penalties if they should be too rudely poached. In the eyes of the law, kissing a lady without her will and permission is a common assault punishable by fine and imprisonment; and it is no uncommon thing to see in the daily police reports cases where a too susceptible gentleman has had to pay dearly for "crushing the ripe cherries" of a lady's lips.

There was once a jovial vicar who was such a glutton for kissing, that when he obtained the wished-for kiss, far from satisfied, he asked for a score; and then—

Then to that twenty add a hundred more;
A thousand to that hundred; so kiss on
To make that thousand up a million;
Tribble that million, and when that is done,
Let's kiss afresh, as when we first begun!

The Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, the well-known author of the Self-Interpreting Bible, had courted the afterward Mrs. Brown for six and a half years before the following conversation took place:

"Janet, we've bin acquainted now six year an' mair, an' I've ne'er gotten a kiss yet. D'ye think I might tak one, my bonnie lass?"

"Just as you like, John, only be comin' an' proper wi' it."

"Surely, Janet, we'll ask a blessin'!"

The blessing was asked, and the kiss taken, and the unusual delight took his breath as he exclaimed:

"Heigh, lass! but it's gude! Noo let us return thanks!" and in six months they were married.

With this anecdote we will close, or the proverbially gentle reader will have lost his patience, and will pronounce anything but a blessing upon our efforts, for kisses upon paper are but a hollow mockery.

WE TWO.

BUT then, you see, I love him. Just that—love.

I wonder if you know one little bit

What the word means? you favoured ones, who rove
Down beaten paths with all things smooth and fit;

With no false note to jar amid your airs;

With no black cloud to blot your sunshine out;

No yearning want to madden in your prayers;

No "Why?" to deepen every bitter doubt.

Easy when noonday floods the clustered flowers,

When wealth and world's approval gird you round,

To learn the fairy tasks of smiling hours,

And "do the duty" fashioned fair when found;

Passing decorous through the guarded life,

Giving from heaped-up coffers, smiling sweet;

Wondering that others fret so in the strife;

Terming each woe untasted, "judgement meet."

"Friendship," "affection," "fondness," pretty phrases!

Well symbolising the fragile things they mean;

Like rosy creepers that, 'mid grass and daisies,

Twine over meadow paths a graceful screen;

Till some strong foot comes crashing from the hill,

Treads down the tendrils, flings the flowers apart,

And the full moonlight, pitiless and chill,

Glares on the bare, cold path—the barren heart.

But Love his strong vitality asserts,

His quenchless power, crush it as you may;

The slow rains rot, the cruel east wind hurts,

But the rich blooms press upward to the day.

Darling, the holy bond 'twixt you and me
Is pure, and strong, and prompt to do and dare,
As when we knelt beside our mother's knee,
And learnt from her sweet lips our baby prayer.

Then, in the golden memories of our youth,
Sun out the dreary present's gathering storm;
Or face it in our deep love's loyal truth,
And a fresh link from troubled hours form;
Let the world frown or shrink, we two together
Can surely ride o'er wilder waves than these;
Knowing the cyclone brings the cloudless weather,
And to some haven roll the roughest seas.

A NIGHT WITH THE MACKEREL FLEET.

BY AN OLD SHELLBACK.

OTHER people's experience is well enough, but I like to get mine first hand. That maxim of our ancestors, "if you want anything done well, do it yourself," is as true now, as to most things, as when it was first written. It follows, therefore that as it is my intention to give some reliable information on the subject of mackerel fishing, the most sensible thing I could do was to start off to Ramsgate and spend a night on board a mackerel boat. To form a resolution is, with me, to carry it out; so I proceeded to Victoria, caught the Granville express, and, in a little over two hours, was landed at Ramsgate. I dined comfortably at the Albion, finished my sherry, went on the pier for a stroll, listened to a yarn from Harry Thornton at the watchhouse, smoked a pipe in the verandah overlooking the harbour, and then retired to my bed to sleep the sleep of the just.

Next morning I was up betimes, and having made a hearty breakfast, thanks to the appetising breeze which was wafted in at the open window, I started in search of a skipper who would take me on my proposed expedition. When I got abreast of the powder-magazine I met a man in a red-tanned slop, who, on seeing me, began to grin all over his face, and who startled me by accosting me by name. I returned the salutation; but I did not remember him a bit.

"Don't remember me, sir, I see," he went on, touching his cap. "I'm Daniel Merret. You lodged with my wife at Eastbourne, in the Pevensey Road."

"Of course I did, Daniel," I replied. "I recognise you now. How is that excellent woman your wife?"

"Nicely, sir; nicely," he replied.

After a few more enquiries I came to the point:

"You are just the man I want," I said. "I came down to have a night on board a mackerel boat. Will you take me in yours?"

"That I will, sir, and welcome. Can you be ready soon after one o'clock?"

"Yes, that will suit me. And now where is your boat, and what is her name?"

"In the West Gully, sir. The 'Polly' she's named—arter the missus—and a livelier little craft never sailed."

"The 'Polly'! I shan't forget, Daniel. One o'clock sharp!" And we separated.

To cut the matter short, I embarked at the time specified. The lugs were hoisted, the bow and stern ropes let go—

The breeze was fresh, the sky was clear,
There were lots of people upon the pier,
But never a one gave us a cheer
As we sailed out of the harbour.

The wind was about west-nor-west, which, when we had got through the old Cadd Channel, enabled us to run off with a flowing sheet. Away went our little craft at a spanking rate, past the mansion of the late Sir Moses Montefiore; past Dumpton Gap and Broadstairs; past the North Sand Head lightship, and out into the open sea. It was a glorious afternoon—a fair wind and a bright green sea; the blue sky above and the sparkling water beneath, and the "Polly" plunging gallantly over the waves. The sea was full of life and motion; the wide sweep of Pegwell Bay and the North Shore, and the town and harbour of Ramsgate, were fading away in the distance; but between them and us was the mackerel fleet—some fifty or sixty boats in all, their tanned sails contrasting finely with the deep blue of the superincumbent sky. Away towards the North Foreland and in the Gull Stream there are numbers of vessels, from the full-rigged ship, with her royals and skysails aloft, to the little trim schooner with her fore and aft canvas, speeding on towards her port in the North. The scene was ever changing, the vessels, with their snow-white sails, passed and repassed, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more beautiful or more exhilarating. On board, the crew of the "Polly" formed a picture of itself. Daniel was at the helm. He was a good-looking fellow, the very embodiment of a bronzed and hardy seaman, while the remainder of the crew, who had fallen asleep over their pipes, were picturesquely grouped, and snoring fitfully. I fancied Daniel would like a snooze as well as the rest, so I said:

"Shall I take her a little while, Daniel?"

"Well, sir, if you wouldn't mind."

When I had taken the tiller, he lighted his pipe and lay down with the rest. For about ten minutes the puffs came regularly, then intermittently, then they ceased altogether, and he was asleep also.

I was alone with my thoughts, what they were need not be recorded, except to say that they were not of a light or irreverent character. The breeze was freshening, and the little craft was bounding on over the curling seas, dashing the salt spray from her bows as though she was instinct with life.

Presently the man nearest me rubbed his eyes, and began to look about him.

"Looks breezy, that it do, sir," he said.

"Yes," I replied; "if we get much more of it, we shall have to reef that fore lug."

"Well, yes, sir." And then he paused, and looked at me steadily. Then he went on:

"Tain't the first time as you've had a tiller in your hand, sir, I'll swear."

"That's true," I replied. "I was originally bred to the sea."

"Now, was ye? And Daniel telled me as how you've took to writing stories, and such like."

"That's true also," I replied. "You see, I've knocked about in almost every sort of craft, but this is the first time I've ever sailed in a mackerel boat."

"Then you'll have a fine chance of seeing what mackerel fishing is, 'cause, if I'm any judge o' weather, we shall have plenty o' work this night."

"So much the better, my lad," I replied; "I'm game for anything short of a calm, and there's not much chance of one this trip."

"True, sir," he replied, "you may take your 'davy o' that."

By this time Daniel had had his anooze, and, waking up, ordered the boy to put the kettle on, and make ready for tea.

Tom dived down below, and very soon the funnel began to send forth volumes of smoke.

"How do you know where to shoot your nets?" I asked.

"That's more than I can tell ye, sir," replied Daniel. "Some people have fancies; but it's all chance or luck. I've known boats not far apart, when one ud have a good catch and one a bad 'un."

After a time the skipper, after looking about, decided to heave to till it was time to shoot the nets. Now, lying-to in a small craft, with a heavy chopping sea, is by no means calculated to add to the comfort and enjoyment of a landsman. If anything can induce a man to cast up his accounts with Davy Jones it would be under the circumstances in which I was now placed, and I experienced sundry qualms, not of conscience, but of the stomach; however, they soon passed off, and I was thus enabled to save my character as an old shellback, which, at one time, was in serious danger.

The aspect of the sky was becoming more and more ominous. The declining sun was shining brightly, but away in the west a bank of heavy clouds was slowly gathering, which presaged more wind, if nothing else. Into this dark mass the sun slowly disappeared, shooting out red angry beams as he descended into the gloom. Presently, from a rift in the sable cloud, just between it and the line of the land, shot out horizontal beams of blood-red light, tingeing, as it were, the waves with streams of golden blood. Then, as the sun sank behind the land, his last rays flashed up into the clouds till they glowed like masses of crimson fire.

The shades of night at last began to fall upon us, and the deck was cleared, the hatches opened, and the crew began to shoot the nets. Those used in mackerel fishing are composed of fine twine, well tanned and oiled, to preserve them from the action of the salt water. Each net is twenty feet deep by one hundred and twenty feet long; the meshes being in size about two inches and a half or larger, and the upper edge is well corked to keep it afloat. At certain distances apart casks, painted black, are used, to show to other boats and passing ships the line of the nets, so that they should not run over them and destroy them.

The "Polly" was put before the wind, and a long rope, called a drift-rope or mooring-line, was hauled up and run along towards the stern, and, as she sailed away, the nets were attached to it and passed out into the sea. When all were paid out, the drift-line was shifted from the stern to the bow of the boat, and she rode at it as though she had been at anchor. The nets thus deposited hung suspended in the water, and, according to the skipper's reckoning, extended between a mile and a half and two miles in

length. The fish, roving about in the dark, get entangled in the meshes of the net, which are large enough to admit the heads as far as the gill-covers and pectoral fins, but not large enough to allow the thickest part of the body to pass through.

There was now nothing more to do till daybreak the next morning, the skipper having determined not to haul the nets during the night.

"And now, Daniel," I said, "I want to know about these Frenchmen stealing the nets?"

"Well, sir," he replied, "there ain't no doubt as there are Frenchmen as do; but when we lose our nets they ain't always stealed by Frenchmen, sometimes they's cut in half by passin' vessels; and I wouldn't say as we ain't got no thieves among English fishermen."

"I suppose that's true," I said. "There are black sheep in every flock; but I think it's not fair to set down all sheep as black, nor yet to set down all French fishermen as thieves."

"Course not, sir; besides, the Frenchmen lose nets as well as we. Who steals them?"

"Just so. I'm glad at least that some English fishermen can look at the matter fairly. Some of the men I talked to this morning seemed to have quite lost their heads over this business."

"That they have, sir," replied Daniel. "If we could catch a Frenchman stealing our nets, or could make sure as we had caught one as had, I'd say, 'give it him hot;' but to pitch into a hinnocent man, because some other Frenchman stole your nets, isn't fair. But, talking about what's fair and what isn't, do you think it right as the Frenchmen should come into Ramsgate and sell their fish, and us not be allowed to do the same in their ports?"

"No, Daniel," I replied, "I don't; and I think the Government ought to see to this and have it altered."

"So do I, sir. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I don't want to stop the Frenchmen from coming into Ramsgate; but if there is a fair wind for Calais or Boulogne, I want to run for it instead of beating up to Ramsgate, and sell my fish in the French market. Why not?"

By this time it was blowing half a gale; but the "Polly" rode at her nets like a duck. As there was now nothing to do and nothing

to see, Daniel suggested that I should go below and have a snooze, and thinking the advice seasonable, I went below, but the cabin was so hot and stifling that I soon came on deck again. The night was as dark as pitch, and but for the riding light you could not have seen an inch before your nose. Still the sight was novel and picturesque. Away on the port bow was the great beacon-light of the North Foreland, and all around us were the lights of the mackerel fleet, dancing like fireflies as they rose and fell upon the crests of the sea. As I sat, there presently came in the distance a sound, as though showers of peas were falling on the water. "Best go below, sir," said the man who had the watch.

"What is it, Jim?" I asked.

"Rain, sir, rain, and plenty of it."

I thought for a moment, "Shall I?" but when I remembered the atmosphere I should have to breathe, I answered, "No, thank you, I'd rather take a wetting."

"All right, sir; button up your waterproof, pull your sou-wester over your eyes, and stand by."

It was stand by, indeed, for before the words were out of his mouth the squall was down on us, the rain descended in a flood, the wind blew, and the sea raged, the waves breaking over the bows in showers of spray. The "Polly" behaved splendidly, her strong bows rising to each sea, dancing over them as if in contempt, and then diving down again, as they passed harmlessly astern. This continued for about a quarter-of-an-hour or twenty minutes, and then the clouds broke, and with a startling suddenness a bright beam from the full-orbed moon pierced through the masses of murky clouds in the west. It was a strange and weird-looking picture, the pale watery light of the moon contrasting strongly with the angry aspect of the sea and the blackness of the firmament above.

"Well," said Jim, flicking the rain from his beard, "that was a hot 'un, short and sweet, like a roasted maggit; but it's all over now. See, it's clearing away to windward."

That was true. The dark masses of clouds, which had emptied themselves on our devoted heads, were hurrying away to leeward, and the sky in the west in a few minutes began to clear. Overhead, large masses of low-flying scud, their woolly fringes gloriously lit up by the silver

beams of the moon, were speeding on like the rear-guard of a defeated army, and then the blue vault of heaven was without a cloud. The moon was in her second quarter, and by this time was within an hour of setting, and as she descended, the stars overhead sparkled with more intense brightness in the deep blue firmament, more profoundly dark and pure from the heavy squall which had recently passed over us. At this moment I was startled by my companion roaring out at the top of his voice, "Ship ahoy! Port, port, hard-a-port!" and, looking round, I saw to my dismay a large vessel, her white sails gleaming in the moonlight, bearing down upon us from the eastward, and only a few cables' length from us. "Call him up, sir," continued Jim; "she'll be right into us!" I put my head down the hatchway, and sang out, and the skipper and the rest came tumbling up in their drawers and stockings, just as they had turned in. As if by instinct we all raised a great shout. The vessel was a brig, and was on the port tack, and was now only a cable's length from us. Daniel flew to the helm and put it hard-a-starboard, which gave our little craft a sheer to port, but it was not enough to clear us. At that moment the crew of the brig seemed to wake up as it were, and her head began to wear round; then as she rose on the crest of a sea she seemed no longer to answer her helm. She hung motionless over us, and I expected the next plunge she made into the trough of the sea, the poor little "Polly" would be dashed to pieces. I had thrown off my waterproof and coat, and kicked off my shoes, in readiness for a swim; but to my intense relief, with a graceful bow, the brig sheered off, the water roaring from her bows, as the stem tore through it, and dashing it right and left into smoke as she rushed past us, leaving a white sheet of buzzing water, which, as she glided away from us, spun away in a long straight wake astern.

For a second or two we all stood like men bewildered and paralysed. Then the skipper fetched a deep breath and said:

"That's the closest shave I ever had. I thought we was all booked for Davy Jones's locker."

"Yes," I replied; "but thank Heaven it was only a shave. You may talk about hairbreadth escapes, but you could not beat that if you lived to the age of Methuselah."

"It's my opinion," said Jim, "as all the watch was asleep."

"Nothing uncommon for a Norwegian," replied the skipper; "they keep the worst watches for a look-out I ever came across."

"It's too bad," said I.

"Too bad!" exclaimed the skipper, "it's wicked. There's many a good craft and many a poor fisherman's bones at the bottom of the North Sea, because these Jawdys and Norwegians don't keep a sharp look-out. They smash into a smack or a mackerel boat on a dark night, and never stops to pick nobody up, and, when they gets into port, says nothing about it. The smack or the boat is missing, and there is nobody left to tell the story of her disappearance."

By this time the brig was spinning away to the "norrard;" the hands had gone below again, and the wind had fallen considerably. When the excitement of our escape had passed off, I began to discover that I was in a very uncomfortable state. My feet were sopping; my hair and beard were tangled and damp; and I felt chilly and forlorn. So, in spite of the terribly close atmosphere and the heat of the stove, I went below to dry and warm myself.

The fore-castle of a large ship is a place which persons of a fastidious turn of mind would not look upon with any considerable amount of complacency; but this little hutch, with its smoke-begrimed ceiling, fusty bunks, and dirty lockers, was something worse than anything I had seen in my travels.

No doubt, my friend Daniel and his crew may have considered that everything was "ship-shape and Bristol fashion;" but, nevertheless, I do consider it hard lines for five or six human beings to be huddled away in such a poky little hole as that. Half an hour sufficed to dry my socks and trousers, and then, the blended steam of men, shag tobacco, tallow candles, and pork being anything but agreeable, I went on deck again.

It was now about half-past four o'clock in the morning; the moon had disappeared behind the low line of the land in the west, and it would have been dark but that the whole expanse of the heavens was ablaze with millions of twinkling stars. Venus was just rising from the midst of a long, low bank of clouds which still lingered in the east, the lovely planet sparkling with more intense brightness as she ascended

into the deep blue firmament above. A stiff glass of grog had somewhat restored my equanimity, and, lighting my pipe, I sat down to have a comfortable smoke. The wind and the sea had by this time fallen considerably, and, nestling up among the folds of the great lugsail, I shortly afterwards fell asleep.

When I awoke the men were heaving in the nets. This appeared to be a long and tedious operation. The drift-rope was taken to the capstan, and as it was hove in, one man stood forward and unfastened the net from it, while the rest of the crew handed in the nets full of the glittering fish. When they were all in, and the fish secured, the sails were set, and the "Polly" began to beat up for Ramsgate harbour.

"Well, Daniel," I said, when the hatches were put on and preparations were being made for breakfast, "what sort of a catch has it been?"

"Fust rate, sir. We have got between one and two lasts, and as fine fish as ever was caught."

"Between one and two lasts!" I said. "How many is that?"

"Say a last and a half—that's about eighteen thousand."

"And what do you think they will fetch?" I asked.

"Well, the lowest price they have fetched in the market has been six shillings a hundred—say from forty to fifty pounds."

"That's a lump of money for one night's fishing."

"Yes, sir, that's true; but then we sometimes only get a hundred or two; so you must put two and two together."

By the time we had had our breakfast we had run in close to the land. The sun was high in the heavens; there was a spanking breeze; the tide was with us; and the wind having drawn more to the southward, we were bounding along over the waters of the dark blue sea towards Ramsgate harbour, which we reached about eleven o'clock.

Personal experience is a valuable commodity, but it often entails upon those who seek it a very large amount of discomfort. At any rate, that was the thought that passed through my mind when I reached my room and looked in the glass, and saw what a disreputable object I presented. Taking all things into consideration, I don't think I shall ever want to pass another night in a mackerel boat.

FATE, OR CHANCE ?

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

ONE bright September afternoon, many years ago, an elderly gentleman was seeing his daughter off from Paddington.

He was a fussy, hot, excitable little man in a white hat ; but as, beyond being the father of the heroine of this tale, he has no further claim to interest, it will only be necessary to state that he was Major Game, home from India on leave.

His daughter was a tall, distinguished-looking girl, with a beautiful, sensitive face, expressive dark eyes, and something in her whole manner and bearing indicating an impressionable temperament, and highly-strung nerves. She looked about nineteen, but was really three-and-twenty. She had been born in India, sent home to England for a chance of life, and in spite of the mournful prophecies of the aunt who had educated her, had grown up into a fairly healthy young woman.

She was, however, deficient in vitality ; excitement and fatigue soon told upon her nervous system, and the London season seemed to have tried her so much, that her father grew alarmed and irritated at her pale looks and listless movements.

A three weeks' stay at a country-house in Sussex having produced no good effect, he persuaded her to accept an invitation from a girl friend, who had written to ask her to rusticate in Gloucestershire for a month or two.

Mabel did not dislike the idea. She was warmly attached to her friend Nelly Dawson, whose thoroughly practical nature had a steady effect on her own imaginative and romantic temperament.

A rather serious flirtation, which on her side had gone beyond flirtation limits, had preyed upon her health, and was the real cause of the dejection which had so much worried her father.

The "young man," from some unexplainable cause, had gone off abruptly, and Mabel could not recover from the disappointment and mortification produced by his departure.

The heart-sickness of deferred hope told upon her ; each time the postman's knock sounded through the house, her pulses beat madly with throbs of expectation, followed by a reaction of bitter disappointment.

There was no one in whom she could

confide ; and she felt as if the sight of her old schoolfellow's kind, ugly, sensible face, would be a comfort beyond expression.

Her father's fussy care irritated instead of soothing her, and she looked forward with absolute relief to freedom from his society, and sank back in her seat with a sigh of delight as the train glided off, and left him perspiring on the platform.

How delicious to have long, lazy days in a quiet old country-house, to lounge in a cool orchard, not to be obliged to make oneself pleasant to a lot of uninteresting people ! In Sussex there had been a household of guests, and every moment of the day she had had to be "en évidence," to dress, and sing, and talk, and be as bright as possible, while she only longed for night to come, that she might think quietly of that wretched young man, and wonder why it was he did not write.

At the Dawsons' she need not wear a mask, she felt sure, and she could venture to tell her troubles to Nelly, who was true as steel ; that "rara avis," a woman who could be trusted with confidences without betraying them.

When the train stopped at Moreton, there was Nelly waiting on the platform, with a world of welcome in her face. She rushed forward, seized Mabel's bag, saw to the luggage, and led her off to the little pony carriage which was waiting outside the station door. She was the very opposite of Mabel, in appearance, as well as in character. She was short, rather "pudgy" in figure, and dressed like a housemaid. She had not one good feature in her face, and yet her expression was so full of kindly human geniality, her smile so cordial, she was so absolutely self-unconscious, that love went out to her spontaneously.

Children smiled back into her kind eyes, dogs wagged their tails at her, cats rubbed themselves insinuatingly against her dress at first acquaintance ; an atmosphere of kindness and sympathy seemed to radiate from her.

Mabel felt this influence at once, and when the little white pony had started on the slow amble which was his favourite pace, and which his mistress rarely disturbed—she put her arm round her friend's substantial waist, and gave her a hearty kiss.

"You dear old Nell—I feel better at once for only just seeing you."

"I can't tell you, darling, how glad I am to have you. It's too good to be true. I'm only afraid you will find us such slow

quiet people, after all the gaiety you are used to. You won't care to stay long, dear, I'm afraid."

"Oh Nell, don't say that. I expect I shall want to stop quite as long as you will care to keep me. It is just to be with you, and to be quite quiet, that I want. You don't know what a comfort it is to be with you. I have been so unhappy, Nell."

"Poor dear child! what is it? Do tell me if it will help you. But I won't ask you anything. If you would rather not speak of it, don't."

"I want to tell you, dear. I want your advice. Come into my room to-night, and have a chat, will you, and let me tell you all about it?"

"Yes, I will; and we'll see if we can't find a way out of the worry, whatever it is."

The Manor House was only a short distance from the station; soon they drove through the lodge gates, and drew up before the hall door. Mabel was a little bit disappointed. The house was smaller than she had expected, and the country round was not so pretty as she had thought it would be. The evening had turned grey and sad with the strange melancholy of approaching change that early autumn brings.

A sudden gust of wind stirred the trees, brought down some fluttering leaves from the old elms, rustled in the creeper that covered the house, and the roses that clustered round the porch.

An old dog came wagging out with a contortion of the face evidently intended for a smile of welcome.

Mrs. Dawson, looking as if just aroused from her afternoon nap, appeared in the doorway putting her cap straight. Mary, the eldest daughter, came forward, and both greeted their guest with affectionate warmth. They had so often heard Nelly speak of Mabel Garne, that they felt as if they had known her for years; she must make herself at home, at once.

In the meantime, Mabel was going through most extraordinary phases of emotion.

At the sight of the grey-stone house, an indescribable sensation had come over her.

She strove to master it; she forced herself to smile in response to the kind and eager words of welcome that greeted her.

She tried to shake off the horrible dread—there was no other word for it—which chained her feet to the ground, and seemed to paralyse her.

Mrs. Dawson led the way into the house. Mabel made a desperate effort, dragged herself forward, and reached the hall.

Once inside, the feeling of terror increased and intensified. If she could have described it, she would have said that she felt as if a strange, unknown power were holding her back. The air stifled her, the walls of the long corridor seemed closing in on her.

The terrifying thought, "I am going to be very ill," struck her, and with it came the longing to be back in London again in her own familiar bed-room.

Mrs. Dawson, in happy unconsciousness of her guest's sensations, led the way into the large, old-fashioned drawing-room.

"Sit down, my dear. Let me give you a cup of tea. You don't look very strong. Has the journey tired you much?"

"I am very tired; I have a bad headache," said Mabel, dropping into a large arm-chair, and pushing back her hat from her throbbing head.

Her hand shook noticeably as she raised her cup to her lips.

"I'm sure you're not well, Mabel," said Nelly, watching her with much concern. "Finish your tea, and then I shall take you upstairs, and make you lie down for an hour. You would like to come now? Very well, let me lead the way."

They passed up the broad staircase, and down another corridor.

"This is your room, dear; now lie down, and let me put this shawl over you. Now, try to get to sleep for an hour. Here is the bell, if you want anything."

Mabel closed her eyes and tried to sleep, but in vain. She sat up at last, and looked round.

The room was exceedingly large and lofty, the walls were panelled, the tall mantel-piece very old-fashioned; there were two windows, one looking across to the church, the other overlooking the carriage drive.

The evening was closing in, and with the gathering gloom, Mabel's strange terror increased.

A horrible sense of familiarity with her surroundings crept over her, chilling her very blood.

She had never been in Gloucestershire before in her life, and yet every room, every passage of this gloomy old house, seemed well known to her.

Her mind seemed to be on the verge of some dreadful recollection and discovery. Each instant she felt as if the next would

bring a flash of sudden remembrance, that would extinguish her reason.

She walked to one of the windows and looked out. Beyond the drive stretched a large meadow, through which a small river flowed; a gigantic chestnut tree stood on the bank, and its branches drooped into the water; a number of ducks were assembled taking their evening bath, flapping their wings, and bursting out into what seemed to Mabel's overwrought senses, unearthly shouts of wild laughter.

For the first time for many weeks, Captain Lawrence was completely absent from her thoughts; they were too absorbed by this overwhelming terror.

She bathed her face and hands with water, and lay down again. It seemed an eternity before Nelly knocked at the door.

"May I come in?"

"Oh yes, Nell. Do come in and sit with me a little, will you?"

"Do you know that you are not looking at all the thing, Mabel. You have been over-tiring and over-exerting yourself."

"I suppose I am overdone. I have a strange sense of 'something going to happen.' Did you ever feel that? I can't describe it to you."

"Rubbish! How often used I to lecture you on your morbid fancies, you silly old goose! I'm not going to listen to you. You must come downstairs at once. We are not going to make any stranger of you, or change our usual ways because you are here. We don't go in for late dinners; we have high tea; and you'll have to put up with it; and it is ready now, and I'm going to carry you off and make you feed well; so come along at once."

Mabel felt cheered, in spite of herself, as they entered the cosy dining-room. A bright fire was burning, and the blaze flickered welcomingly. The table, with its shining silver, pretty china, and daintily-arranged flowers, was most inviting; and to her own surprise, Mabel found herself absolutely enjoying her tea, and growing each moment less depressed and more contented. The quietness of the simple country talk; the importance attached to trifling matters that a Londoner would hardly consider worth mentioning; the indifference to topics Londoners considered just then all-absorbing—turned her thoughts into new channels in spite of herself.

Old Mrs. Dawson gossiped away placidly about some of the people living round, whose acquaintance Mabel was to make in

a day or two. Mild dissipation, in the way of croquet parties and picnics, were planned. Nelly was evidently devoured by anxiety lest her London friend should be bored for want of amusement; while in reality Mabel looked forward with anything but pleasure to days spent in the society of people who, she felt instinctively, would be uncongenial to her.

"Nelly dear, don't think I shall be dull with you," she said at last. "I would rather be quite quiet, really, if you don't mind. I should never be dull with you; and if we could just be together, and go for walks, I should like that better than anything."

"Well, then, to-morrow we will explore a bit. You must see the village first. Ours is considered 'a very picturesque village,' as one of the old ladies in the union told me one day when I was reading there. She is such an old character. You have often heard me speak of old Mrs. Waine, mother, haven't you? She is eighty-five years old, Mabel, and she has her sight and hearing still; and she does a great deal of needlework, and she likes to know what the fashions are; and she will knit you a pair of mittens for the winter."

"We will certainly go, poor old thing!" said Mabel.

"And now I wonder if you would be too tired to play to us a little," said Nelly, presently. "Just anything you like. Mother is so fond of music, and I have often told her about your playing."

Mabel was not sorry to comply with this request. Music with her was a passion. She expressed in her playing all the romantic sentiment that formed so large a part of her character. As a matter of course Chopin was one of her favourite composers. She played some of the nocturnes with exquisite expression, while her hearers sat entranced; but presently—half-unconsciously as it seemed—her fingers passed uncertainly from one key to another, till at last they began the solemn wailing chords of the Funeral March. As she played it, the same strange and dreadful feeling crept over her as had seized her on entering the house. Her hands grew icy cold, the perspiration broke out on her face.

She broke off abruptly, and got up from the piano, apologising for her bad memory, and saying she was not in the mood for playing that evening.

At half-past nine, the servants filed in for

prayers, and then the candles were brought, and Nelly and Mabel went upstairs together.

"Now, then, dear, what is wrong with you? I have come in to hear all about it," said Nelly, as she shut the bed-room door. "Sit down in that arm-chair, and I'll take this stool at your feet. I can see there is something on your mind, you look so absent and tired. I suppose it is a heart affection, isn't it?"

"I'm afraid it is, Nell. Put your head in my lap, and I'll try and tell you all about it."

Then came a long and embarrassed confession, to which Nelly listened with eager attention. It was much the usual story. It began with where they met; how they danced and sat out the whole evening; what he said to her; what she said to him; how he used to listen to her playing by the hour together; how he sought her on every occasion, and had almost proposed to her once, only some wretched individual burst in at the very moment; and how there was another girl very keen on him, whose mother was a most unscrupulous schemer; and how he had gone off to Scotland shooting, and was staying at the house of these very people; and how when he had called to say "good-bye," she had been out. Her fear was now that she should hear from some outsider that he was engaged.

"And you know, Nell, I have no self-control; I never had, and I should betray myself. I know I should show what a dreadful blow it was to me; and then for anyone to see that I had cared for him! It would kill me, I think."

Nelly did all she could to console her. According to Mabel's account this other girl must be "a horrid thing," who used unlimited powder, dyed her hair, made up her eyes, and even smoked cigarettes. Her mother, too, was atrociously vulgar.

"But they are rich, Nelly. I know they mean to catch him, and they will."

"Well, if he preferred such a girl as that to you, let him go, Mabel. He isn't worthy of you. He is not the only man in the world. But I'm sure he must like you; he couldn't help himself, and I dare say he's just flirting a little with that other girl, and it will all come right with you, I am sure. You mustn't be impatient: these things take time. Now go to sleep, and get as strong and well as you can, while you are with us; and when you meet him again, and he sees your pretty face, the other girl won't have a chance.

Now, good night, and don't get up in the morning till I call you."

Mabel felt immensely comforted by this talk. She looked at herself in the glass, and realized with delight that she was really a very pretty girl, far prettier than the odious Miss Paterson.

"Only she has money, nasty thing! and men think so much of that, and I am a pauper compared with her."

She had been so absorbed by this confidential chat that the strange feeling of terror that had possessed her had dropped into the background, and it was only when she put out her candle and got into bed that it flashed across her mind with something of a shock. She shut her eyes determinedly and tried to go to sleep.

It was a fruitless effort; she was hopelessly wide-awake. The sensation of waiting expectantly for some rapidly approaching event again possessed her. The long hours went on, and as they passed she grew more and more restless and excited. Every sense seemed strung up to an agony point of expectation. At last she could remain in bed no longer. She got up, went to the window, and looked out. It was a superb moonlight night. The great trees seemed asleep in the silence, so absolutely motionless were they; their long black shadows were thrown across the grass.

The little river shimmered in the silver light; there was not a cloud in the sky; one could have seen to read a letter by the cold, brilliant moonlight. Mabel stood a long time looking out on this divine calm; at last, feeling chilled, she turned away, and was getting into bed again, when to her surprise she heard the sound of wheels coming up the avenue—slowly—slowly—slowly.

She hastily went to the window, drew back the blind and looked out.

What did this mean? What could this be coming towards the house? Her heart gave a great bound and almost stopped beating; the perspiration stood in beads on her face.

What was this terrible black shadow thrown across the path, coming gradually nearer and nearer, creeping forward with such sinister slowness? Mabel could hardly believe her eyes. It was a hearse!

A hearse coming here, to this house, at this time of night! What could it mean?

Fascinated with horror, she tried to cry out; but the strange, hoarse cry that es-

caped from her dry lips, was all the utterance left to her.

Still holding back the blind with one hand, she watched the great black horses slowly advance, till they drew up just under her window.

The driver was sitting with his head bent forward, his face averted.

But presently he turned towards her; she felt he would look at her, but she was powerless to move. He slowly lifted up his face, till his eyes met hers and looked full into them.

For at least two minutes she gazed down into those terrible eyes—then, with a force of will which seemed actually to rend her body, she tore herself away from the window, rushed to the bed, and hid her face in it, palpitating from head to foot.

After a horrible pause, during which she had to fight the most desperate impulse to go back to the window, she heard the heavy muffled sound of the wheels slowly drawing away from the house. She got up at last and looked out. There was only the stillness of the moonlight, and the solemn beauty of the night. All was silence and heavenly calm.

"Heaven help me! I am going mad! I am going mad!" she said wildly to herself.

She knelt down and prayed fervently, and gradually grew calmer, but sleep was now impossible.

That man's face! To the last day of her life it would haunt her. She would know it anywhere—in the streets of London, in the solitude of the country. She felt as if she would wither up and die under the glare of those unearthly eyes.

In the morning Nelly was absolutely shocked by her friend's appearance.

Pale, with black hollows under her eyes; with feverish, parched lips and trembling hands; the girl looked on the verge of a serious illness. She complained of a bad neuralgic headache, and did not get up till lunch time.

She had decided not to say a word to Nelly of the vision of last night. No one would believe her, she felt assured; they would think she had lost her senses. She ventured on one little speech—she enquired if the house were not very old—and, with an attempt at a laugh, asked if there was a family ghost in any shape or form.

"No," Mrs. Dawson answered, in her cheery, matter-of-fact way; "the house was old, certainly, but there is not even the distinction of a haunted room in it.

I do not believe in ghosts myself at all; there is a great deal of foolish nonsense talked about them."

Mabel saw the necessity of keeping silence as to last night's revelation, if she did not wish to be regarded as a lunatic. She roused herself sufficiently to go with Nelly in the evening to a village near. Long afterwards she remembered that walk with vivid distinctness. The cold mists were coming on as they passed through the fields, and down an avenue of grand old oaks. From the steeple of a quaint old church the bells were ringing for the evening service, and the sound of the water rushing through the little weir made a soft accompaniment. They crossed the worn stone bridge over the stream that flowed through the village, the water so clear that you could see the pebbles at the bottom.

The sadness of early autumn was over everything; near home they were burning weeds, and the blue smoke was curling up in the damp and heavy air. Mabel grew more and more quiet and depressed, and Nelly herself seemed to catch the infection, and made no attempt to break the spell of silence. In her own mind she was worried by the idea that her friend was disappointed with their home, and that the stay that was to have been so long, would be probably shortened by one of those fictitious summonses that are a recognised means of ending a visit found to be tedious.

The evening passed away in a melancholy fashion. As ten o'clock approached, Mabel felt cold shivers of terror creep over her. Several times she was on the verge of confiding her fears to Nelly, and begging to be allowed to sleep with her; she was too deficient in moral courage to do so, however, and though she felt when the bed-room door closed on her friend, that her last hope was gone, she held her peace.

She looked out. The night was not nearly so bright as the previous one had been; dark clouds were hurrying across the sky, and the moon seemed vainly struggling to emerge from them; the trees were tossing in the wind, and their restless shadows waved across the window. But this was better than that awful stillness of last night, only the wind moaned and wailed so sadly down the great chimney. She got into bed, but no sleep refreshed her. A dog howled in the distance, and the strange feeling of horror crept over her again as she listened.

She had left her candle alight, but so far from being a comfort to her, its dim light only made the dark shadows in the corners of the great room more mysterious and gloomy. At last, from sheer exhaustion, she fell asleep. A dream came to her: she thought she had to stand at an open window, past which a never ceasing army marched in rows of twenty abreast. Each man, as he passed, turned his face towards her and looked into her eyes, while she was compelled by a force she could not resist, to search through each row of men as it filed by her, for one face. Oh! the aching misery of watching that dreadful procession, the endless torture, the suspense, the horror of what would happen when the features she was searching for appeared, and those unearthly eyes looked into hers! At last she felt it was coming; in the agony of the moment, a cry burst from her lips. She had sprung from the bed in her sleep, and, palpitating from head to foot, found herself standing by the window as before; she drew back the blind and looked out. The moon broke through the clouds, and sent a great flood of light over the drive.

The hearse was there, waiting. The driver lifted up his eyes till they fastened themselves on hers with a long, penetrating, sinister gaze. Then he turned his face away; the horses moved on; the clouds hid the moon again; the vision had vanished!

One firm resolve took possession of Mabel when the grey morning light stole into the room. No fear of offending her friend; no false shame of speaking of what she had experienced; no earthly power should induce her to sleep in that house again.

She felt she would simply die on the spot were she to pass through another such night. She kept to her resolution; she called Nelly in and told her everything, announcing at the same time her firm intention of returning to town that afternoon. The story sounded foolish enough, told in the practical daylight; and she could see by Nelly's disappointed and incredulous face that she placed very little faith in it, except as a sign of disordered health.

Mrs. Dawson and Mary, when informed by Nelly of what had happened, were more

unmerciful in their judgement, and rather indignantly declared that the whole story was imaginary. The fact was, Mary said, that Miss Garne found their simple way of living too quiet for her, and had invented an excuse to get home.

Mabel's looks pleaded for her; but she felt, when she said good-bye that afternoon, rather like a naughty girl in disgrace; and relief at turning her back on that unlucky house was mingled with a feeling of shame and regret, as she looked at the estranged faces of her hostesses.

Nelly drove her to the station, and watched the train off with a sad and reproachful face. The two girls parted with a chill of restraint.

All these feelings of annoyance were forgotten, however, when a few days later Major Garne wrote to say that his daughter had been completely prostrate since her return, and had been threatened with a nervous fever. Change of scene was imperatively ordered by the doctors, and they were leaving for Switzerland almost immediately. Mabel would be so grateful if her friend Nelly would travel with them.

The offer was accepted. Mrs. Dawson was completely mollified, and poor Mabel's terrible vision was satisfactorily accounted for, as the vagary of a mind unsettled by approaching illness.

Ready March 21st, 1887.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durdan," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Barby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VIII.

"KEEP YOURSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE
WORLD."

"I WANT to speak to you," said Adrian Lyle to Kenyon that night. "There is no one in the smoking-room just now. Will you come there?"

Something in the gravity of the clergyman's face and tone struck the young man. He felt uncomfortable. He rose, however, and sauntered lazily through the vestibule and passages to the room indicated.

The two young men lit their cigars, and seated themselves on one of the many lounges scattered about. The deep-seated gravity in Adrian Lyle's eyes met the curious and somewhat uncomfortable gaze of Neale Kenyon's. It was the latter who broke silence.

"What is the important matter?" he asked.

"Kenyon," said the young clergyman, with that straightforward simplicity which was his notable characteristic, "you must not think I am intrusive, or that I presume upon the cordiality of our chance acquaintanceship, if I put to you a question that has been troubling me not a little. Is your marriage quite—straightforward?"

All the colour faded out of Kenyon's face, but his eyes flashed wrathfully.

"Your question," he said insolently, "is a strange one, though men of your cloth are proverbial for meddling. May I ask why you should think there was anything wrong about it?"

"Yes," answered Adrian Lyle. "From something your wife let fall, I learned her position and circumstances. She is young, innocent, trusting. That, of course, is no news to you. Her loneliness, and the absence of all other friends or relatives, embolden me to put this question. If you assure me it is all right and satisfactory I will believe you. Kenyon, for Heaven's sake don't prevaricate. That she loves you with all her heart and soul is plain to see. Tell me is she really—your wife?"

Neale Kenyon took the cigar from his lips, and flicked off the grey ash carelessly.

"You are a—clergyman," he said. "I know interference is part of your office. Pray do you put these questions to all the couples you chance to meet on their honeymoon?"

"I think," Adrian Lyle said quietly, "that it would be better to answer my question in the spirit I put it, than try to pick a quarrel with me for what is only a pardonable interest in your young wife. She is such a child!"

"A child with whose innocent confidence you have been tampering!" burst out Kenyon in sudden anger. "You are not the first of your cloth who has deemed it a duty to weaken the love, or destroy the confidence that should exist between husband and wife!"

"I think," said Adrian Lyle with dignity, "that if, instead of abusing me or my profession vaguely, you would give me the simple assurance I ask for, it would be better for all parties. It is not so unnatural for one gentleman to seek from another the security of a woman's honour, that you should resent my doing so."

"A woman's honour," said Kenyon, replacing his cigar, "is her husband's consideration."

"Then I am to consider my question answered," said Adrian Lyle eagerly; "and I will beg your pardon for my doubts. It only seemed to me that as her religion is not yours, some legal formalities might have been neglected. If"—and he coloured and hesitated—"if you would like me to read the ceremony of your own Church—"

Neale Kenyon laughed harshly. "My good sir," he said, "I really have none. All creeds, doctrines, and denominations, are pretty much the same to me. I give you candour for candour, you see."

Adrian Lyle rose to his feet. "A woman," he said sternly, "is always generous where she loves. Experience has not taught me that the case holds good with men. The greater the trust, the deeper is often the deception."

"Your experience," sneered Kenyon, "seems to have been singularly unfortunate—even for a clergyman."

"You might do me the justice," said Adrian Lyle, "to meet me on equal ground as one man of honour meets another. Had anyone—not of my order—put the question to you that I have put—"

"I should have kicked him out of the room!" interrupted Kenyon, springing to his feet, and speaking with a passion that the occasion scarcely seemed to warrant. "That is how I should have answered an impertinence as unwarrantable as yours!"

Adrian Lyle looked at the flushed, handsome young face, with pained, proud eyes.

"Perhaps you are right to resent my question," he said in a low, but still calm voice. "In your place I might have done the same. No one but a brute or a villain could have had the heart to deceive an innocent, trusting child like—like your wife. But,"—and he lifted his head, and shook back the dark hair from his brow—"your anger is a welcome relief to my doubts. I feel I have done my duty. If, as you seem to think, I have overstepped the bounds of courtesy or prudence, I can only repeat—I ask your pardon. You might easily grant it," he added, with that winning smile which lent his face so rare a charm, "for after to-night it is extremely improbable that we shall meet again. I leave Rome to-morrow morning. Therefore," and he frankly extended his hand, "say you forgive me, Kenyon, if only for the sake of the pleasant days and hours we have spent together."

He had tossed aside the cigar which he had scarcely smoked, and, in fact, had taken up more as an excuse to be companionable.

The light fell on his face, and its nobility and power seemed to stand out in grand relief against the sullenness and gloom of Kenyon's. The latter, half-reluctantly, touched the outstretched hand.

"I—I bear you no ill-will," he said. "I dare say it did seem a little strange; and Gretchen could not have enlightened you much. But I give you my word of honour, she is my wife, and the world shall know her as such. Will that content you?"

"Perfectly," said Adrian Lyle cordially, and with a glad belief in the acknowledgment he had scarcely hoped to win. "And now you will excuse me if I leave you. There are some necessary arrangements to make, and I have a long journey before me to-morrow."

"It is a pity to leave Rome so soon, is it not?" said Kenyon. "You have scarcely seen anything of it."

"I think," answered Adrian Lyle, with that quiet smile which seemed to mean so much, "that it is better for me to go before I see—more."

"Of course you are the best judge," Kenyon said indifferently.

He was angry with his own anger; nor would he confess, even to himself, that it was a relief to think of Adrian Lyle's absence.

"I must be more careful in future," he said to himself. "There shall be no more picking up chance acquaintances; they are apt to turn out troublesome. However, I have got out of this very well."

The sound of the closing door fell upon his inward reflections, and roused him. He was alone—alone and at the mercy of such conscience as he still possessed.

A sudden paroxysm of fear seized him.

"I hope," he said, "that he believes; that he won't make enquiries. Pahaw! Why should I fear, even if he did? Nothing would induce her to leave me. Nothing would induce me to leave her. The absence of some paltry formalities can't weaken a man's honour or his love; and she is safe with me."

Safe with him! How many a man has said those same words in similar case! How many a man has been led to forswear them when the trance of passion is over—when the glamour of love is past!

It was not of this that Kenyon thought now. To him, at this time, Gretchen was as purely and surely his wife, as though a dozen bishops had consecrated their union, and all the laws of the land had sealed their marriage ritual. At this time; but

he had not yet asked himself, how long would it last? "I should never fail her; I never could," Kenyon muttered, as he paced to and fro the deserted room. "On the whole, though, I am glad that fellow has gone. He had a knack of making one uncomfortable, and he would have ended by putting fancies into Gretchen's head. For the future, it is best she should have only me!"

The hotel omnibus stood before the door early the next morning, and Adrian Lyle had just tossed his travelling-bag into the interior. He left his heavy luggage behind, for he had resolved to penetrate into those wild mountainous districts which form the boundary between the Papal States and the kingdom of Naples.

Adrian Lyle was at present possessed with an intense, overmastering desire for solitude. He wanted to get away from even civilisation and comfort, to—so to speak—have out with himself these inward conflicts and inclinations; these weak yieldings to temptation; this forgetfulness of the aims and objects of that high mission with which he was entrusted—before he should again take up the burden of his life's duties, and labour in the toil and heat of the world's great vineyard.

It was so early that he had no fear of seeing the Kenyons. He had no wish to do so. Yet, as he stood there, with the morning sunlight shining over the broad piazza, and the cool, fresh air fanning his brow, a light hand touched his arm, a voice, whose music sent a strange thrill to his heart, murmured: "Where do you go so early, Mr. Lyle?"

It was Gretchen.

For a second or two he stood quite still, unable to frame a word. Then with an effort, he spoke:

"Did not your husband tell you? I am going to do a little mountaineering. I want to get out of the pale of civilisation for awhile. That Sabine range has been tempting me ever since I first beheld it."

"And where do you go first?"

"To Velletri," he said. "Then I intend to walk on to Segni."

"And—when do you come back?" she asked timidly.

"I am not quite sure," he said, with a strange hesitation. "Perhaps I may not see you again."

"Oh, that is hard," she cried, with so true a ring of regret in her voice that it smote him to the heart. "I had so much

to say—so much to ask," she went on hurriedly. "And you know you promised to help me. Oh, I feel so ignorant, so helpless—and—and I dare not even go to any of the priests for counsel, for Neale does not wish it."

There was such appeal in her face, such yearning in her eyes, that for a moment all the man's self-command was shaken. For a moment his conscience seemed to rebuke him with cowardice. Suppose a day should come when this struggling soul might be required at his hands—when, in answer to question or demand, he could but say: "I was like the Levite of old, I passed by on the other side!"

The struggle was sharp but short. He turned from the clinging hands, the beseeching eyes.

"My child," he said, "you have your husband. Take to him your doubts, your fears, your sorrows. I—even if I would—must not interfere between you, unless he expressly desires it."

"But," she said timidly, "you do not understand. Neale will not speak with me of—of the things you did. He says he has no creed at all; that I may keep to my own, or any other, it does not matter."

"And are you not happy," he asked—"happy enough to trust and believe in the doctrines and tenets of your own Church? If accident had not thrown me in your way—what then?"

"I suppose I should have been content, then," she said almost regretfully. "But you see, Mr. Lyle, I did meet you, and you—made me think."

The blood seemed to ebb away from Adrian Lyle's face, leaving it cold and colourless as marble. "I am sorry," he said abruptly, almost as it were against his will.

"And I think I am sorry, too," said Gretchen with a sigh. "For I can't forget—and I can't go back to what I was, and I have no one to explain or to teach, since I must not go to the priests. But," and her face brightened, "perhaps we shall meet again after all. You may return from the mountains even before I leave Rome; and meanwhile I will think over all you have told me, and try to understand your religion, for it seems a very beautiful one——"

"Perhaps," Adrian Lyle interposed hurriedly, "we may meet again. If you need me, I think we will. Meanwhile, do not vex your mind with doubts and fears. Religion

—the purest and highest form of religion—is a very simple thing, believe me. It can be summed up in few words. ‘Do good to others, and—keep yourself unspotted from the world.’ That sounds hard, perhaps, to those who know what the world is; but it is possible, even without the barricade of convent walls and bodily martyrdom.”

“I will remember,” she said gladly. “Ah, I see you must go now. Indeed, I am very sorry. Do—do say you will try and see us again.”

“I will,” he said very low, but very earnestly, “if your husband desires it.”

Then he turned away and left her standing there in the early sunlight, with softly troubled eyes, and so strange a regret on her eloquent young face that it needed no words to convince him how sincere her sorrow was.

“After all,” he muttered to himself, as the vehicle jolted and rolled over the uneven Roman streets, “after all, what a coward I am! It is not for her sake I am leaving—only for my own.”

CHAPTER IX. THE POISON OF DOUBT.

WHEN Bari came to his master for his orders for the day, Neale Kenyon noticed that he loitered about the room as if he wished to say something more than he had already done.

“Is anything the matter?” the young Englishman asked uneasily. “No one arrived here that I know—eh, Bari?”

“No, Monsieur,” answered the man readily. “I keep a look-out for that. But—but is Monsieur aware the English clergyman has left?”

“Yes,” answered Kenyon sharply. “What of that?”

“Nothing, only Monsieur may perhaps congratulate himself on the fact. The gentleman was too curious, and—had too strong an admiration for Madame.”

Kenyon wheeled round and faced him. “What makes you say so?”

“Oh, many things,” answered the Italian. “I am observant, as Monsieur knows, and I have not too great an admiration for gentlemen of the cloth, as Monsieur also knows. The clergyman is young, and handsome, and clever, and Madame has for him a great interest. So great that she came down to see him off, and procure his address.”

Kenyon’s brow grew dark. “Is that true?” he said hoarsely.

“Quite true,” answered Bari. “They had a long conversation—religious, of course. Mr. Lyle has hopes of converting Madame. He assured her they would meet again.”

“Did he?” said Kenyon scoldingly. “Perhaps he will find someone else has a voice in that little matter.”

“I—I do not think it wise that Madame should ever have been permitted to be too confidential with him,” said Bari. “Religion has for women so strange a charm, and the priest is so attractive in that he is the man and yet—the priest. Monsieur must remember that all the early life of Madame has been steeped in religious fervour—that it is a part of herself. If denied the consolations of her own Church, she seeks another. But something of that sort she must have; it is the fault of her education, her home, her surroundings. Even the good Lisschen was very devout,” he added with a smile.

Kenyon’s face grew darker and darker. “Her religion shall be—me,” he was saying to himself. “The clergy understand the value of women; but I have no intention of permitting interference between Gretchen and myself. Adrian Lyle is a fine fellow, but he is a priest, and like all his order, he puts forward the feelers of curiosity under the garb of spiritual interest.”

Aloud he said: “I am quite aware of Mr. Lyle’s plans, Bari, for he informed me of them last night. He will not come across our path again.”

The man bowed, but a curious smile crossed his lips. “I am glad to hear it,” he said quietly. “I do not think Mr. Lyle is a friend of Monsieur’s.”

Kenyon was doomed to be irritated for many days by the constant mention of Adrian Lyle. Gretchen was full of regret at his departure, of fear that he might come to harm among the lawless “contrabbandieri”; full too of lamentations respecting questions she had failed to put, or doubt she might have solved.

Bari had been right when he said that in the present state of her mind, she longed for the consolations of religion. She had been used to depend on priestly guidance and direction. She now found herself cut adrift from it entirely, and that too in scenes and places only too well calculated to awaken the memories of her carefully instilled faith. Every procession, every church open at all hours to all comers, every roadside shrine, every chime of bells, or chant of choristers, seemed a rebuke to her.

Even at this early stage she had learned that to speak of such feelings to Kenyon displeased him. That was one reason why she so missed Adrian Lyle. As long as their conversation ran in the safe grooves of Art, or spent itself in question and answer, or sought historical information, all was well; but, as day after day passed on, and they grew familiarised with Rome, Gretchen found that Kenyon had as little sympathy with her favourite Madonnas or Saints, as she could summon up for the broken and discoloured statues of Venus, or the torsos of Hercules, or the Etruscan bronzes and Pompeian relics about which he raved.

"I have had enough of the Old Masters," he said laughingly one day. "We have seen so many of their works. Doesn't it strike you that there is a marvellous lack of variety in their subjects? Priestcraft has been the ruin of Art. Fancy what these fellows might have done had they been left uninfluenced! But they had no wider scope of subject than the Madonna, or the Saints. I am sick of both. I believe that man stuck full of arrows is a humbug; and as for the others, with what Mark Twain rightly calls their individual 'trade marks,' I decline to see anything saintly about them. It is my belief that if a half or even a third of the people who visit Italy spoke out their honest opinions, they would say its Art is simply an idealised antiquity. Why, perhaps our own modern paintings may acquire these same deep tones, and shades, and softness of colour, centuries hence. But the world has surely advanced enough to admit that the subject and treatment of a picture is more really Art than the fact of mixing colours. Fancy if we walked through a modern gallery, and found that every second or third picture was a repetition of one subject! How horribly monotonous! I am sure we must have seen some five hundred St. Sebastians, and double as many Madonnas, and some scores of Judiths and Susannas. Is it not so?"

"Yes," Gretchen confessed. "I think there are a great many similar subjects. But the great painters doubtless lived simple and devout lives, and did their best to please Heaven."

"I dare say they did their best to fill their pockets," answered Kenyon scoffingly. "Art may be a divinity to worship, but she must also be a divinity that pays."

Gretchen sighed.

They were standing by the fountain of

Trevi, and her eyes were watching the water as it dashed over the broken heap of massive rock which so well simulates Nature's handiwork.

"I do not think I understand Art at all," she said gently. "Only sometimes a Madonna's face will touch me, or the patience and sadness in some Christ's eyes draw tears to my own; but these are the pictures you dislike."

"I dislike what is superstitious and untrue," answered Kenyon. "I do not profess to know much about Art or artists. I think they are an incomprehensible race of beings myself. They claim something they call 'ideality.' It may be very grand, but I think it is also very uncomfortable. Look at sculpture, now! What is that but repetition? We laugh to scorn the traditions of gods and goddesses. We call Olympus and its deities a fable, but they alone are sacred to one special Art, and a man may take any specimen of womanhood or manhood, call it into the life of marble, christen it Venus or Psyche, Diana or Bacchus, Hercules or Daphne, and straightway it becomes classic! Really, the more we think of life, the more assured we must become that it is one vast humbug!"

"Do not sweep away my faith in everything," said Gretchen, laughing, "unless you can give me something better. I can't have you growing 'cynical,' as Mr. Lyle used to say when you made these remarks. I wish he were here to argue with you," she went on regretfully. "I am not clever enough; I can only agree."

"That is much better," said Kenyon, drawing her hand into his arm and moving on across the sunlit square. "For then, I feel satisfied with myself. Sympathy is a very comfortable thing."

"Is England at all like this?" she asked presently. "I seem to know so little about it, and you rarely speak of it."

A shade passed over the young man's handsome face. "It is not at all like this," he said. "The air is certainly not dream-haunted. And," with a short laugh, "I certainly can never remember feeling poetic or fervid there, as you have so frequently accused me of becoming. The hunting is very jolly," he added, relapsing into commonplace, "and life is very comfortable. You foreign nations don't seem to know what home life is."

"No?" queried Gretchen meekly. "Yet they say the English and the Germans are so much alike in that respect."

"Wait till you see John Bull as he is," laughed Kenyon. "Then tell me where the points of resemblance begin or end."

"Are we going there soon?" she asked.

"I—I suppose so," he answered. "This wandering life must come to an end, sweet as it is. I often wonder if you will like England," he added doubtfully.

"I shall like any place where you are," she answered, with love's sweet certainty of a future with which the joys of the present will be eternally blended.

"But," hesitated Kenyon, "I may not be able to be with you always. I mean as we are now. Life can't be a continuous honeymoon, sweetheart!"

"Of course not," she answered gravely. "I shall not expect to keep you by me every hour. I should not like to interfere with your duties. I have not forgotten that you are a soldier. You have been a long time away, have you not?"

"Yes," he said, "on account of my eyes. Thank goodness, they're all right now."

"Do you remember," she said, with that pretty shyness which still lent her love so great a charm, "do you remember how you deceived me at first about your sight? I felt so sorry. I thought you really were blind and alone, and so I went and spoke to you."

"For which fact I shall be ever grateful," interpolated Kenyon.

"But it was not quite fair of you, all the same," she said gravely.

"Don't tell me you are sorry for it, though," he said, laughing. "Really I could not help myself. Your unconscious soliloquy had interested me so much, and the opportunity was too tempting."

"Oh, I am not sorry—now," she answered readily, "and I am sure I never shall be; but how little I thought——"

"How little one ever thinks!" interrupted Kenyon, almost sharply. Innocent, unconscious words like these were like a sharp touch of pain, the recurrent stab of some remorse that probed his heart when he was off his guard.

"I suppose so," she said. "But after all, what does it matter? Everything must have a beginning. Only it seems strange that what at the time we hardly notice, should become a matter of important results."

"You are becoming quite a philosopher," laughed Kenyon. "But I would rather you were the childish maiden of the woods who apostrophised cross old Lisschen."

"I wonder how she is now," said Gretchen suddenly. "How they all are," she added remorsefully. "Ah," and she looked at Kenyon with all that awakened soul in her deep soft eyes, "I can never be like I was then. When I look back on that day, I feel as if years must have passed over my head."

"Don't speak so solemnly, it is like a reproach to me," said Kenyon; "and," hurriedly and almost with passion, "reproach from you I could never bear—I, who have altered all your life."

"But made it such a happy one," she said tenderly.

And their eyes met under deep shadows of those mossy haunted woods of beautiful Borghese, and amidst the tempered glory of leaf and sunlight, and the warm spring loveliness of the drowsy noon, they told again the old tale which still held for both its golden charm, which still was sweet to ear and heart as when its first murmur broke the silence of the lonely woods of Dornbach.

GENERAL McCLELLAN.

THE story of the great Civil War in America is being told by instalments. Grant, Lee, and Lincoln have each contributed chapters, and now General McClellan has given to the world his "own story" of his life, of the war, and of the part he took in it. The book* is published after his death, and its editor, Dr. W. C. Prime, assures us that the narrative was not written by the General with a view to publication, but entirely with the object of leaving to his children a faithful record of his military and political career, so that they might know how much he had been wronged, and how constantly he had followed his duty. If there is an occasional tinge of petulance, and a considerable exhibition of egotism in the narrative, one cannot be surprised when the personality of the man and the object of his writing are kept in mind. Possibly had McClellan been writing with the set object of publication, he might have left as calm, and dispassionate, and admirable a record as did General Grant. But "other men, other manners," and McClellan never had the brilliant gift of silence which characterised Grant.

* "McClellan's Own Story." By George B. McClellan, late Major-General Commanding the United States Armies. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co.

Those of our readers who can carry their minds back to the terrible days of the American War, will recall how the name of McClellan was always at first among the most prominent on the side of the Federal armies. How and why he gradually sank into the background has never, perhaps, been quite understood by English people.

George Brinton McClellan was not one of the ready-made soldiers of the Rebellion. He was the son of a doctor, in Philadelphia; was born in 1826, and, after completing his schooling, entered the Military Academy at West Point, in his sixteenth year. Graduating in 1846, he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, and immediately afterwards was sent to take part in the war then in progress with Mexico; the very war in which Grant also received his "baptism of fire," and in which the future commander of the Confederate armies, General Lee, also took part. McClellan served with gallantry and credit, and he was promoted to First Lieutenant, and then to Captain, in acknowledgement of his services. When the Mexican War closed he was in command of the Corps of Engineers, and brought it back to West Point, serving with it there down to 1851. The following year he was one of the Red River Exploring Expedition, and a year later he was employed in exploring the route of the projected Pacific Railway.

In 1855, he was one of the Army officers selected by the United States Government to go to Europe in order to obtain information regarding the latest developments in military science, and to watch the practical working of the new systems in the Crimea.

It is curious that the Minister who made the appointments to this Special Commission was Jefferson Davis, then United States Secretary for War, but afterwards President of the Confederate States.

The party of which young McClellan formed one, were hospitably received by the British Government, although neither the French nor the Russians would have anything to say to them. They went to the Crimea, and under the wing of General Simpson, they were afforded every opportunity of watching military operations on a larger scale than ever they had seen before. Returning to America, McClellan was transferred to the Cavalry, in which he held the rank of Captain; but in 1857 he resigned, on being offered the post of Chief Engineer to the Illinois

Central Railroad. Later, he became Vice President of that Railway; and still later President of the Eastern Division of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad.

In 1860 he married, and took up his residence in Cincinnati, Ohio. There he was settled—engaged in railroad business—when the war began. He immediately abandoned his profitable commercial undertaking, and placed his services at the disposal of the Federal Government.

On the twenty-third of April, 1861, he was commissioned Major-General of Volunteers in Ohio; on the fourteenth of May he was made Major-General in the United States Army and placed in command of the Department of the Ohio; and in July of the same year, after having driven the Secessionists from Western Virginia, he was summoned to Washington, and placed in command of the Army of the Potomac.

The promotion was startlingly rapid, but then so also were events at that time, and the United States had few trained and experienced officers to place in charge of the enormous armies which were being created.

When summoned to Washington, McClellan found the capital in considerable peril, for the defeat at Bull Run had demoralised both the Administration and the Army. He at once set to work to organise the defences, and to restore military order. But as soon as he had made the capital safe, the "politicians" began once more to direct affairs, and to interfere in things which should have been left entirely to the President and the Generals. With regard to McClellan's own political attitude, we find the following in the Autobiography:

"Soon after my arrival in Washington in 1861, I had several interviews with prominent Abolitionists—of whom Senator Sumner was one—on the subject of slavery. I invariably took the ground that I was thoroughly opposed to slavery, regarding it as a great evil, especially to the whites of the South; but that in my opinion, no sweeping measure of emancipation should be carried out, unless accompanied by arrangements providing for the new relations between employers and employed, carefully guarding the rights and interests of both; and that were such a measure framed to my satisfaction, I would cordially support it. Mr. Sumner replied—others also agreed with him—that such points did not concern us, and that all that must be

left to take care of itself. My reply was, that no real statesman could ever contemplate so sweeping and serious a measure as sudden and general emancipation, without looking to the future, and providing for its consequences; that four-and-a-half millions of uneducated slaves should not suddenly be manumitted without due precautions taken, both to protect them and to guard against them; that just there was the point where we differed radically and probably irreconcilably."

On the whole, then, it would seem that McClellan's ideas about the Slave question were pretty much what we have already seen were Lincoln's, until long after, when Abolition became politically ripe.

For the rest, it does not appear that McClellan had associated himself as yet prominently with either of the great political parties, although he was rapidly becoming an object of dread to some of the party leaders. He was a Democrat, and a follower of that Stephen A. Douglas whom Lincoln had conquered in debate; but he was not an ardent politician. He says:

"I knew nothing about 'practical politics,' had never even voted except for Douglas; and during the whole period of my command I never did or wrote anything, or abstained from doing or writing anything, in view of its political effect upon myself. My ambition was fully gratified by my position of the command of the army, and, so long as I held that, nothing would have induced me to give it up for the Presidency. Whenever I wrote anything of a political nature, it was only with the hope of doing something towards the maintenance of those political principles which I honestly thought would control the conduct of the war. In fact, I sacrificed my own interests rather than acquiesce in what I thought wrong or impolitic. The President and his advisers made a great mistake in supposing that I desired political advancement."

Still further does he show that single-hearted desire to serve his country without personal ambition—or, with only a modest supply of it—in the letters to his wife. In one he writes:

"I receive letter after letter, have conversation after conversation, calling on me to save the nation, alluding to the Presidency, dictatorship, etc. As I hope one day to be united with you for ever in heaven, I have no such aspiration. I would cheerfully take the dictatorship, and

agree to lay down my life, when the country is saved. I am not spoiled by my unexpected new position. I feel sure that God will give me the strength and wisdom to preserve this great nation; but I tell you, who share all my thoughts, that I have no selfish feeling in this matter. I feel that God has placed a great work in my hands. I have not sought it. I know how weak I am, but I know that I mean to do right, and I believe that God will help me, and give me the wisdom I do not possess. Pray for me that I may be able to accomplish my task, the greatest, perhaps, that any poor, weak mortal ever had to do. God grant that I may bring this war to an end, and be permitted to spend the rest of my days quietly with you!"

This was not written, be it remembered, for the public eye, or with a view to effect, but in a simple communication to his own wife. And all through the private letters, of which many now see the light for the first time, we observe the same high-mindedness and strong religious sense of duty—not unmixed, however, with a considerable flavour of self-esteem.

Before going to Washington, McClellan had, as we have seen, cleared Western Virginia, and, in fact, that district seems to have been then the only part of the country in which military chaos did not reign. It was during this brief campaign that McClellan and Grant came near, the latter being eager to forsake tanning and to gain a post in the Army. McClellan does not say much about Grant, but this incident is worth repeating:

"I think it was during my absence on this very trip (to Indianapolis) that Grant came to Cincinnati to ask me, as an old acquaintance, to give him employment, or a place on my staff. Marcy or Seth Williams saw him, and told him that if he would await my return, doubtless I would do something for him; but before I got back, he was telegraphed that he could have a regiment in Illinois, and at once returned thither, so that I did not see him. This was his good luck, for had I been there I would no doubt have given him a place on my staff, and he would probably have remained with me and shared my fate."

The last allusion is to the persistent enmity with which McClellan was afterwards driven from the command, and subjected to humiliations, by the political intriguers. Grant was fortunate enough to

escape all that, and strong enough to follow his own plans and keep his own counsel. Hence his success where the other failed.

It was customary at this time to look upon the Secession as not a very strong movement, and as one that would be easily counteracted—in short, that the war would be brief, and the Union quickly restored. McClellan was, with Lincoln, among those who thought differently, who foresaw and tried to provide for the great and terrible task before the country. Some people say that but for the interference of the “politicians,” Lincoln and McClellan between them would have brought the war to an end by the middle of 1862. This, however, is hypothetical; but it is also certain that both Lincoln and McClellan had to fight two wars simultaneously—one with the Southerners, and the other with party politicians. In the latter, Lincoln won and McClellan lost. And before leaving this branch of the subject, let us show what the General himself thought of the organisation against him, and how he appraised the results:

“They committed a grave error in supposing me to be politically ambitious, and in thinking that I looked forward to military success as a means of reaching the Presidential chair. At the same time, they knew that if I achieved marked success, my influence would necessarily be very great throughout the country—an influence which I should certainly have used for the good of the whole country, and not for that of any party at the nation’s expense. They therefore determined to ruin me in any event and by any means: first by endeavouring to force me into premature movements, knowing that a failure would probably end my military career; afterwards, by withholding the means necessary to achieve success. That they were not honest is proved by the fact that, having failed to force me to advance at a time when an advance would have been madness, they withheld the means of success when I was in contact with the enemy, and finally relieved me from command when the game was in my hands. They determined that I should not succeed, and carried out their determinations only too well, and at a fearful sacrifice of blood, time, and treasure. In the East alone it is quite safe to say that we unnecessarily lost more than a quarter of a million in killed, wounded, and prisoners, in consequence of my being withdrawn from the Peninsula,

and not properly supported. Taking both East and West, and counting the losses also by disease, I do not doubt that more than half-a-million of men were sacrificed unnecessarily for the sake of securing the success of a political party.”

With the explanation that by “they” is chiefly meant Stanton and Chase, we gain a little more information from the following:

“Soon after Mr. Stanton became Secretary of War, it became clear that, without any reason known to me, our relations had completely changed. Instead of using his new position to assist me, he threw every obstacle in my way, and did all in his power to create difficulty and distrust between the President and myself. I soon found it impossible to gain access to him. Before he was in office, he constantly ran after me and professed the most ardent friendship; as soon as he became Secretary of War his whole manner changed, and I could no longer find the opportunity to transact even the ordinary current business of the office with him. It is now very clear to me that, far from being, as he had always represented himself to me, in direct and violent opposition to the Radicals, he was really in secret alliance with them, and that he and they were alike unwilling that I should be successful. No other theory can possibly account for his and their course, and on that theory everything becomes clear and easily explained.”

Of Lincoln, McClellan had a high opinion, and believed in his good faith towards himself. Not long before he died, indeed, McClellan told Mr. Rice (whose book about Lincoln we recently referred to*) that he sincerely believed that the President stood by him steadfastly, but that the influences at Washington had proved too strong even for him. In the Autobiography we find the following, among other references to Lincoln:

“Long before the war, when Vice-President of the Illinois Central Railway Company, I knew Mr. Lincoln, for he was one of the Council of the Company. More than once I had been with him in the out-of-the-way county-seats where some important case was being tried, and, in the lack of sleeping accommodations, have spent the night in front of a stove listening to the unceasing flow of anecdotes from his lips. He was never at a loss, and I could

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xxxix., p. 470. “Abraham Lincoln.”

never quite make up my mind how many of them he had really heard before, and how many he invented on the spur of the moment. His stories were seldom refined, but were always to the point."

What McClellan had to do after completing the fortification of the capital, and disposing in it sufficient forces for its defence, was to create an army. The word, even, was a new one in the experience of the American nation, and the people had very little idea what it meant. There were few soldiers in the country, and still fewer of them had grasped the realities and the potentialities of the situation. McClellan had thus both to educate public opinion and manufacture his army; and he was able to do the latter by reason of his experience in actual warfare, and his observation of the operations of great armies in the field in the Crimea.

"The Army of the Potomac," says Dr. Prime, "grew like a vast engine constructed by a master mind. Its history is the reward of the constructor, ample, and the only reward he ever received."

His soul was in his work, and his labour was enormous. Whether at Washington or in the field, he always personally watched the execution of important orders. In camp he seems to have been ubiquitous and sleepless, and soon the soldiers learned never to be surprised at seeing him anywhere at any time. It was doubtless this energy — this perpetual sharing of the dangers and labours of the campaigns — which endeared him so much to the men.

What, then, did McClellan do? He saved Washington, created the Army of the Potomac, and, when raised to the chief command, restored all the armies to order. He was the first to organise a definite plan of campaign; he despatched expeditions, which were successful, to North Carolina, New Orleans, and elsewhere; and he planned steadily towards the accomplishment of what eventually proved to be the master-stroke in the war — the taking of Richmond, albeit he was not suffered to take part in the final accomplishment of his plans. Indeed, when he left Washington, in 1862, at the head of his own army, with the object of striking a decisive blow at Richmond, he was attacked by his political enemies in the rear, and superseded in the command — or, rather, he was removed without a successor being at once appointed. Of course, his plans collapsed. Frustrated there, he formed a new plan,

and was advancing rapidly in pursuance of it, when again checked from Washington, and the Army of the Potomac was recalled.

The capital was once more in danger, for the Union forces had been defeated, and the Confederates were now marching on Washington. The intriguing politicians scuttled away to save their own precious bodies, and the President alone retained his calmness and judgement. He it was who begged McClellan to forget his wrongs and save the country. "Without one moment's hesitation," said McClellan, "and without making any conditions whatever, I at once said that I would accept the command, and would stake my life that I would save the city. Both the President and General Halleck asserted that it was impossible to save the city, and I repeated my firm conviction that I could and would save it. They then left, the President verbally placing me in entire command of the city, and of the troops falling back upon it from the front." McClellan set to work, collected his staff, despatched them with instructions to the different fortifications, and soon had all necessary preparations completed within the lines. Then he rode out to meet the retreating army, and the record of the meeting must not be omitted:

"It was after dark—I think there was moonlight—by the time I met the first troops, which were, I think, of Morell's Division, Fifth Corps; Porter had gone on a little while before to make arrangements for the bivouac of his troops. I was at once recognised by the men, upon which there was great cheering and excitement; but when I came to the Regular Division (Sykes), the scene was the most touching I had up to that time experienced. The cheers in front had attracted their attention, and I have been told since by many that the men at once pricked up their ears, and said it could only be for 'Little Mac.' As soon as I came to them the poor fellows broke through all restraints, rushed from the ranks and crowded around me, shouting, yelling, shedding tears, thanking God that they were with me again, and begging me to lead them back to battle. It was a wonderful scene, and proved that I had the hearts of these men."

He had also the esteem and respect of the enemy, it should be noted, as the following incident, relating to a somewhat later period, strikingly shows. McClellan tells it himself:

"I remember very well, when riding over the field of South Mountain that, passing by a severely wounded Confederate officer, I dismounted and spoke with him, asking whether I could do anything to relieve him. He was a Lieutenant-Colonel of a South Carolina regiment, and asked me if I was General McClellan; and when I said that I was General McClellan, he grasped my hand, and told me that he was perfectly willing to be wounded, and a prisoner, for the sake of taking by the hand one whom all the Confederates so honoured and admired. Such things happened to me not unfrequently, and I confess that it gave me no little pleasure to find that my antagonists shared the feelings of my own men for me."

We meet with many little narratives of this kind, but one must not judge them as if they were intentional parade for effect; McClellan, as we have said, was writing for his children—not for the public—and it was natural and proper that he should show them how their father was regarded by men. But it is right to add, that the General's statements with regard to the scenes just related are confirmed by other and independent testimony.

We speak now of the Federal Army as if it were a force of true-born American citizens of the Northern States. As a matter of fact, it was a perfect "olla podrida" of nationalities, such a mixture as has rarely if ever been seen in modern warfare. Here, for instance, is a description of the division commanded by General Blenker, when McClellan first went to Washington:

"The regiments were all foreign, and mostly Germans; but the most remarkable of all was the Garibaldi regiment. Its colonel, D'Utassy, was a Hungarian, and was said to have been a rider in Franconi's circus, and terminated his public American career in Albany Penitentiary. His men were from all known and unknown lands, from all possible and impossible armies: Zouaves from Algiers, men of the 'Foreign Legion,' Zephyrs, Cossacks, Garibaldians of the deepest dye, English deserters, Sepoys, Turcos, Croats, Swiss, beer-drinkers from Bavaria, stout men from North Germany, and no doubt Chinese, Esquimaux, and detachments from the army of the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein. Such a mixture was probably never before seen under any flag, unless, perhaps, in such bands as Holk's Jägers of the Thirty Years' War, or the Free Lances of the Middle Ages. I well remember that in returning

one night from beyond the picket-lines, I encountered an outpost of the Garibaldians. In reply to their challenge I tried English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Indian, a little Russian and Turkish; all in vain, for nothing at my disposal made the slightest impression upon them, and I inferred that they were perhaps Gipsies, or Esquimaux, or Chinese!"

Whatever the components of the Army of the Potomac, however, they certainly knew and loved their General. He reorganised both it and the Army of Virginia; infused new courage into both officers and men; and marched off on the memorable flying campaign into Maryland, where were achieved his most brilliant victories.

Within two or three weeks after the retreat upon and panic in Washington, he had led back the troops and won the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. He did this, as he said himself, with "a halter round his neck," for he had only been given the command in Washington, and that verbally. When, long afterwards, asked why he had not asked for written orders, he replied, smiling: "It was no time for writing, and, in fact, I never thought of it."

His enemies did, however, and made the most of a breach of technical etiquette, for they feared the consequences to themselves of another great victory by McClellan. After Antietam, therefore, pressure was brought to bear on the President, and McClellan was ordered to transfer the command to General Burnside, and to go himself to Trenton, New Jersey, there to await orders. It was a terrible humiliation, but he bore it bravely. The effect on the army was striking, and we will give it in McClellan's own words:

"The order depriving me of the command created an immense deal of deep feeling in the army—so much so that many were in favour of my refusing to obey the order, and of marching upon Washington to take possession of the Government. My chief purpose in remaining with the army as long as I did after being relieved, was to calm this feeling, in which I succeeded. I will not attempt to describe my own feelings, nor the scenes attending my farewell to the army. They are beyond my powers of description. What words, in truth, could convey to the mind such a scene—thousands of brave men, who under my very eye had changed from raw recruits to veterans of many fields, shedding tears

like children in their ranks, as they bade good-bye to the General who had just led them to victory after the defeats they had seen under another leader? Could they have foreseen the future, their feelings would not have been less intense!"

And here ends "McClellan's Own Story," for his narrative ends with these words. The subsequent events in his career we must gather from other sources.

When he withdrew, as ordered, to Trenton, he held himself in readiness there should his services be needed. This was in November, 1862, but his services were not again requested. In 1864 the Democrats nominated him for the Presidency, and perhaps it was one of the greatest mistakes of his life to allow himself to be nominated. He accepted the nomination reluctantly, and did not expect to be elected, but one would have preferred to remember him as altogether apart from the political plotting and counter-plotting of those times. On the day of Lincoln's re-election in 1864, McClellan resigned his commission as Major-General in the Army of the United States, and endeavoured to find work of some kind as a civilian.

But even here, it is said, political enmity followed him, and prevented his obtaining a number of appointments he successively applied for. So, early in 1865, he went with his family to Europe, sorrowfully explaining to a friend: "I cannot find a place to earn my living here, and I am going to stay abroad till I am forgotten; then come back and find work, which I may get when these animosities are cooled down."

It is worth noting here that, while in Europe, General McClellan was for a time the guest of the Comte de Paris, who served under him during a portion of the war. The Comte has recently, in an article in an American Review, paid a high tribute, based on his personal knowledge and observation, to the fine qualities of McClellan as a soldier and a man.

The people of the United States did not forget McClellan during his long absence, and, indeed, that absence served only to make the hearts of his countrymen grow fonder. When he returned in 1868, soldiers and citizens alike combined to offer him a magnificent reception. He wrote, protesting in advance against any demonstration; but it was of no use, and he received what has been described as the most impressive ovation that has ever been given to a citizen of the American nation. For hour after hour a procession filed past

the balcony in which he was seated while an enthusiastic crowd thronged the streets, and added to the chorus of cheers and congratulations.

This was in 1868. Then he built a house at Maywood, in New Jersey, and settled there among his friends. Nine years later he was elected Governor of the State of New Jersey, and proved a successful and popular administrator, eminently just and free from partisanship. He was glad, however, when his term of office expired, and then he went abroad again and travelled through Europe to Egypt and the Holy Land. Having a wonderful knowledge of languages, he was at home in all countries. He was, moreover, a highly-cultured man, and "a general student of the literature of the world."

He kept pace with the progress of thought and discussion in history, philosophy, and art; he delighted in archaeological studies, and in following the work of geographical explorers. His own literary gifts were not inconsiderable, and he was master of a clear and nervous style of composition. Always full of occupation of one kind or another, he was yet devoted to his family. His wife and children were his constant companions.

Of his religion, his friend Dr. Prime tells us that it was "deep, earnest, practical; not vague or ill-defined to himself or others, not obtrusive, but outspoken when required, frank and hearty. . . . In all his life, public and private, every purpose was formed, every act done, in the light of that faith. It was this which not only produced in him that stainless purity of walk and conversation which all who knew him recognised, but also gave him strength for all the great works of a great life. It was this which created that magnetic power so often spoken of, won to him that marvellous devotion of his soldiers, made all who knew him regard him with affection, those who knew him best love him most."

General McClellan died of heart disease in the autumn of 1885. In accordance with his strict injunctions, the funeral was a private one, but immense crowds thronged the streets, and respectfully and sorrowfully saluted the body of the much-abused soldier on its way to its last resting-place. He was buried at Trenton, New Jersey, the very place to which the cruel order of the Executive had consigned him, when removing him finally from the command of the army which he had made and led to victory.

CELESTIAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

How few, when they assume their most graceful attitudes and put on their best looks in front of the photographer's camera, remember that the light, which is to portray their features, left the sun some minutes before they took their place, and that the light which, at that very instant, is starting from the sun, will not arrive until several minutes after the operation is over.

Still fewer know that, by the same wonderful agency of light which issued from its source before they were born, are revealed the existence and the whereabouts of heavenly bodies invisible to the human eye, even when assisted by the most perfected telescopes. Yet this is what is being done just now.

In this year's "Annuaire of the Bureau des Longitudes," M. le Contre-Amiral E. Mouchez, Director of the Paris Observatory—as well known to astronomers and others for his courtesy as for his scientific attainments—has a remarkable article, entitled "La Photographie Astronomique," in which he informs us that, during the last two years, considerable progress has been effected in the application of photography to the study of the heavens. For the future advance of astronomy and the increase of our knowledge of the universe, its importance can hardly be overrated.

Messieurs Paul and Prosper Henry, able astronomers and learned opticians, by apparatus of their own construction, have obtained results which far surpass anything yet done in stellar photography. They have thus demonstrated the possibility of easily completing, in a few years, and with the help of a dozen observatories suitably distributed over the surface of the globe, a complete map of the celestial vault, comprising not only the five or six thousand stars visible by the naked eye, but also the millions of stars, down to the very faintest, which are visible only with the most powerful instruments. It is a gigantic enterprise, which would hardly have been dreamt of a few years ago.

This Map will consist of the eighteen hundred or two thousand sheets necessary to represent, on a sufficiently large scale, the forty-two thousand square degrees comprised in the surface of the sphere, besides giving separately, on a more extended scale, all groups of stars or other objects which present a special interest. It will

thus bequeath to future ages the state of the heavens at the close of the nineteenth century, with absolute authenticity and exactitude. The comparison of this Map with those which may be made at more and more distant epochs, will enable future astronomers to detect and to prove numerous changes of position and magnitude that are now merely suspected, or even measured, for only quite a small number of stars—from which will most certainly result many an unexpected fact and many an important discovery.

Up to the beginning of the present century Astronomy had scarcely more extended aims than the study of our Solar System and the laws which regulate its movements. Its attention was naturally directed to those heavenly bodies which were nearest to us, which were the easiest to become acquainted with, and which offered to the human race the most immediate interest. The rapidity and wide extent of their movements also allowed observations of their positions sufficiently exact to ascertain the diverse conditions of their course round the sun, and, consequently, the laws of universal attraction, although the instruments then available were of but moderate precision and power.

But the case was different for stars which are called in common parlance "fixed." The extreme slowness of their apparent movement in space—when it could be discovered at all—their prodigious distance, compared with the brevity of human life; and the minuteness of our measurements, even when taken from different points of our Solar System; required instruments of great power and observations of the utmost delicacy, to make it possible to prove that those stars had undergone a slight change of place within the narrow span of an astronomer's life.

Moreover, Catalogues or Maps, comprising only several millions of stars, demanded many years of assiduous labour whose perfect exactitude could not be guaranteed, and in spite of the zeal and perseverance displayed by astronomers devoted to this line of research—so fatiguing from its monotony—they could never attain, by such insufficient processes, the knowledge of more than a very small portion of the heavens.

The most laborious as well as the most thankless branch of astronomical observations, and that which absorbs the greatest

share of work in the leading observatories—consists in the exact determination of the position of the stars in what might be called the Geography of the Sky. The only object of this enormous labour is to study the laws of the stellar movements. It was especially the hope of aiding those discoveries which led to the construction of grand Catalogues of the Stars, like those of Piazzi, Lalande, and others. In future, photography will undertake the ungrateful task, with marvellous precision and rapidity.

Science had already been able to establish, both by observation and analogy, that there does not exist in the universe a single body that is motionless; and this axiom is of more world-wide importance than at first sight appears. But Science has hitherto been unable to ascertain, with some degree of certitude, the movements of more than a very restricted number of stars, while the movement of our sun himself through space is as yet only very imperfectly known.

Admiral Mouchez conscientiously recapitulates the progress hitherto made by astronomical photography, which can only be briefly glanced at here. The Observatory of Harvard College was the first to obtain good photographs of stars, and to show with what remarkable precision they supplied the measurement of their relative positions. In 1856, Mr. De la Rue built a special Observatory at Cranford, furnished with a Newtonian telescope, whose mirror he had himself constructed. In the following year, this instrument gave him good images of the Moon in nine or ten seconds, of Jupiter in twelve seconds, of Saturn in one minute, and of several bright stars in two or three minutes.

But a great point was to obtain a stereoscopic view of a heavenly body; to behold its surface in solid relief, as if it were actually suspended before the eye. De la Rue succeeded in this. By taking two images of the Moon at a suitable interval, he produced stereoscopic views which show, in perfect relief, all the ups and downs of our satellite's surface. The same result was obtained with the Sun and Jupiter. But as the Moon always presents the same face to our view, the stereoscopic effect was realised by taking advantage of the slight changes produced on her face by libration. As to Jupiter, the two views required were taken at an interval of twenty-six minutes, during which time the planet's rapid rotation gave a change of aspect sufficient to produce the stereoscopic effect.

MM. Henry were led to apply photography to star-mapping by the almost insuperable difficulties presented by the ordinary methods. They had undertaken to continue and complete the Ecliptic Map, begun by Chacornac, and left unfinished at his death in 1873. This Ecliptic Map was intended to represent all the stars, down to the thirteenth and the fourteenth magnitude, which lie within a zone, five degrees broad, on each side of the ecliptic. Its great utility would be to facilitate the discovery of asteroids or minor planets, principally circulating within that zone. Every sheet of this Map contains on an average from fifteen to eighteen hundred stars. Sixty sheets are already finished.

In the course of their labours at this herculean task, they came upon regions of the sky where the stars were so numerous as to compel them to simplify the usual methods, to avoid too great a loss of time. But soon afterwards, as they approached the Milky Way, the groups of stars became so crowded that they were absolutely bewildered amongst them, even with the help of their perfected methods. It was then that they had recourse to photography, thereby making the stars register their own positions.

The plates so obtained, examined by the microscope, are most interesting from several points of view. The aspect of the images of stars is so characteristic that it is not possible to mistake them for accidental stains. The stars appear, in fact, not in the simple form of a single uniform round black spot, diminishing in size and growing lighter in tint in proportion as the star is fainter, but like a collection or group of little black points, very crowded in the centre with stars of the first ten or twelve magnitudes, and more widely scattered, but still quite as black, for the fainter stars; and, at the extreme limit of visibility, beyond the last stars which give a certain and decided image, the plates show several small groups of minute black dots, still more wide apart, evidently revealing the existence of yet feebler stars, which, however, can only be suspected, but cannot be confirmed by any other proof.

Unfortunately, whatever progress may be accomplished in optics or in photography; however great sensibility or penetrating power we may hope to give to our instruments; it is evident that we shall never obtain a sight of the very last and most distant stars. Whatever limits we may succeed in

reaching, there will always remain beyond those limits, an infinity of other stars, lost to us in the profundity of the heavens, which will ever escape our cognisance. Still, it is certainly by means of photography and the microscopic study of the plates it gives us, that we shall reach the most distant possible limit.

At present, at the Paris Observatory, MM. Henry readily obtain, in an hour, plates of six or seven superficial degrees, on which are reproduced, with extreme brightness and purity, and without sensible deformity of shape, every star, down to the sixteenth magnitude; that is, beyond the visibility attained by the best refracting telescopes under the sky of Paris. They have even obtained many stars of the seventeenth magnitude, which, as already stated, and as far as we know, have never yet been seen by mortal eye.

And besides stars, they sometimes also discover on the plates, objects invisible by the most powerful instruments. Such is the nebula of Maia, in the Pleiades, which shows itself like a very brilliant comet's tail starting from the star, and which had never before been signalised, although the group of the Pleiades is one of the best studied constellations in our northern sky. Mr. E. Pickering had already noticed it thirteen days before MM. Henry; but he attributed it to a defect in the plate, until informed of their discovery. Neptune's satellite, always invisible at Paris, has also been photographed throughout every portion of its orbit, even at its nearest approach to the planet.

Photography, it is confidently expected, will not only enable a complete map of the heavens to be made, but will also aid the study of double and multiple stars, as well as the search after unknown stars. We may also hope to discover amongst them relative movements of the highest interest; for instance, in globular masses and agglomerations of stars, like the marvellous cluster in Hercules. On the plate, with unassisted sight, it appears nothing more than a small diffuse spot, two or three millimètres in diameter—a millimètre is the twenty-fifth part of an inch—but, examined with a good lens, it is seen to contain several hundreds of stars, little differing from each other in magnitude, perfectly defined, surrounding an apparently irreducible nucleus, which nevertheless, it may be taken for granted, contains a still greater number of stars.

By direct observation, no measurement

is possible, even by the very best instruments. The eye is dazzled by what looks like a mass of innumerable grains of brilliant dust, which no astronomer has ever attempted to map; whereas, under the microscope, the plate will give their measurements with not less precision than facility. No rich display of earthly gems, no artistic illuminations by terrestrial fires, can rival that seeming handful of glittering spangles, each particle of which is a sun; each sun, doubtless, attended by an offspring of planets and their attendant satellites.

It is impossible that such a wonderful condensation of stars can be either an effect of perspective or a result of chance. It seems evident, therefore, that they must be held together by some interstellar influence, some law of unity, which not only caused their original assembling, but still maintains their association throughout the lapse of ages. Were it otherwise, their own proper independent motions, acting ever since the world began, would long ago have dispersed them throughout the heavens. Exactly the contrary has happened. Though infinitely more numerous than the swarm of gnats which dances in the wintry sunshine, they yet, like them, are held together by an invisible bond of fellowship.

Of course, we are unable to conceive the laws which govern these enormous groups of stars, which often seem no more than faint nebulae, more or less rounded in form. As yet, it has only been possible to be aware of their existence. Photography, perhaps, will permit us to ascertain some general law in their motions, if such exist—whether, for example, as is already believed, the plane of their orbits be not far from coinciding with a common equator—which would be a most remarkable fact, if proved. But by transmitting to posterity faithful images of those groups of stars which are susceptible of such treatment, we shall afford our descendants the possibility of discovering important secrets in their organisation, whose complexity must be infinitely greater than anything we are aware of in our Solar System.

The above are only a few scanty hints of the immense scope embraced by Celestial Photography; but they suffice to show that amateur astronomers and photographers—indeed, everyone who takes an interest in physical science—will be well repaid by a careful perusal of Admiral Mouchez's clear, concise, and comprehensive paper.

THE PRIBYLOV ISLANDS.

WHEN reporting some time ago on the animal life of the Pribylov Islands, my account was confined solely to the seal, as being the one chief object of attention on the spot. It naturally overshadows every other production of the sea; being, in fact, the sufficing reason for the existence of the islands and their inhabitants. But it must not be supposed that this is the only form of animal life. There are other strange creatures which, though worthless, or nearly so, to beings in a high state of civilisation, are yet of the greatest importance to the semi-civilised natives, who turn every particle to account in a way incomprehensible to more favoured people.

We will begin with the sea lion (*Eumetopias Stelleri*), which may be studied to better advantage in the Pribylov Islands than anywhere else in the world.

In the first place, it is twice the size and weight of his cousin the fur seal, averaging ten to twelve feet in length, with a girth of eight to nine feet round the chest and shoulders, and a weight of twelve hundred pounds. By its physical organisation it is able to adapt itself to all conditions of climate, being equally at home in Behring's Sea, or on the well-known rocks at the entrance of the harbour of San Francisco, which every visitor goes to see. The proprietor of Woodward's Gardens in the latter city made up his mind years ago that the fur seal was no good to a showman—it drooped and pined as soon as it got into the tank, and its death was only a question of a week or two—whilst the sea lion, he asserted, might be taken to New Orleans or to Boston without being affected in the slightest degree. Again, it cannot progress on land like its smaller relative, which under favourable conditions can be driven five miles in twenty-four hours; the sea lion, however, could never manage more than two. It is really ridiculous to see the huge erect creature balancing and swinging its long, heavy neck as a lever, bringing up its hind quarters, which hardly ever leave the ground, in an utterly painful way. It is polygamous, but does not maintain any system or regularity such as obtains among the fur seals, and is the distinguishing characteristic of the rookeries. It never hauls up more than a few rods from the water under any circumstances, and is so shy and suspicious that its habits cannot be noticed unless the

greatest care be taken to utilise all advantages of wind and silence. It is the most timid and cowardly of all creatures; the merest approach is enough to drive a whole herd into the sea, and a boy with a rattle or a pop-gun could do it, and keep them there for the whole season. The female is not quite half the size of the male; she will be eight to nine feet long, and weigh four to five hundred pounds. She has the same general cast of feature and build, but is never so fat as her master, as she, like the fur seal, has no occasion to fast, but comes and goes as she likes. There will be found ten to fifteen to each male; the young are produced soon after landing, and at once begin to look about, paddle in the surf, and roar in imitation of their parents. They are fed with the richest of milk at long and irregular intervals, but, as with the other amphibians, they thrive wonderfully; for from nine to twelve pounds at birth, it reaches seventy-five to ninety pounds in less than four months. By this time it has shed its first coat and teeth, and has become at home in the water, where it was clumsy enough at first, though never so helpless as the fur seal.

To us the sea lion is of no importance, for he has no fur, and is consequently of little or no value. To the native, however, he is invaluable for his skin, flesh, fat, and sinews. His capture is the only serious business they have at St. Paul. It requires great care and diligence, and is not unaccompanied with some physical risk. This is how they set about it.

By the end of September, when the seal rookeries have broken up, and all real business is at an end, fifteen or twenty of the best men are selected by the chief. They take their provisions and make themselves at home in certain huts near the sea lion resting-places, prepared if necessary to stop a month, till they get their quota of two hundred to three hundred. The creatures cannot be approached by day, so a moonlight night, with plenty of clouds, is always chosen. The natives sally forth in Indian file, preserving the most discreet silence, and crawl on all-fours between the sea and the sleeping herd. Then at a signal, all at once jumping up, make the most diabolical row with shouts, screams, and pistol shots. The huge brutes suddenly awake in the utmost consternation; those whose heads are turned to the sea at once make for it, and are lost for this night; those whose heads are directed the other

way, rush straight ahead inland ; a hundred yards, however, are enough for them, and they sink down panting and breathless. They are allowed to recover, and are then driven very slowly and quietly on towards the huts where their captors have been keeping watch. This is a very long process, but it comes to an end at last, and the thirty or forty huge brutes (for they never get more at once) are penned till the day of slaughter. This is the proper expression to use ; but we must throw away every preconceived idea derived from farm-yards or cattle markets. To form a sea lion pen, it is only necessary to stick stakes in the ground in a circle ten to thirty feet apart, to embrace them with a line or two of sinew rope, and hang on calico strips, which may flutter in the wind. There you have a sea lion pen, as absurdly comical a thing as any to be found in all the wide world. In this primitive prison the brutes are kept nine or ten days and nights, and, although they never make the slightest effort to get out, it must not be supposed that they are paralysed and quiescent ; on the contrary, like all the race, they are ever on the alert, wakeful, writhing, twisting and turning one over the other, without a moment's pause. Suppose then, that after several nights, the full complement of two to three hundred is obtained, the next job is to drive them to the killing ground eleven miles off. This, of course, is a work of time, and may take three weeks, if the weather is unfavourable. The young ones and the females being lighter, go ahead and induce the bulls to follow, but every now and then some of the latter give in and sink breathless. Time has then to be given them to recover, and then they are urged on again, nothing being found so efficacious as the opening and shutting of the gingham of civilisation in the face of an old bull. To make short work of the matter, let us now suppose the creatures arrived at last at their destination. The males are shot down, and the others speared.

Now what do the natives do with them ? Well, they are utilised to the utmost. The flesh is eaten ; the skin serves to cover boats ; the intestines are blown out, then dried, then cut in ribbons and sewn strongly with the sinews to form an admirably waterproof garment, known as the Kamlaika, which is fully as impervious to wet as india-rubber, and has the advantage of being far stronger, and at the same time unaffected by grease or oil.

The throats are treated in the same way, and are used for boot tops, whose soles are made from the hide. The stomach does duty as a receptacle for the oil procured from its former owner, which, unlike that of the fur seal, boils out clear and inodorous. The bristles of the moustache are exported to San Francisco, where they are highly prized by John Chinaman, who uses them as pickers for his opium pipe, and for various ceremonies in his joss house. The entire carcase thus gets utilised ; hung up in the open it keeps more or less well, chiefly the latter ; not that that matters much, for the natives have a decided predilection for meat in that state which is known to us as "high." So much for the sea lion.

Now comes a very early acquaintance of ours, the walrus, that queer monster which has been familiar to all of us since childhood from pictures. Everybody can at once call it up to remembrance by the feature which distinguishes it from all others, the two enormous tusks projecting straight down from its upper jaw. Many of us, even naturalists, may think we know all about it, and so thought Mr. Elliott. He had read everything that had appeared in print since Olaus Magnus, in 1555, and fancied he could learn nothing new, or at any rate, interesting to science. What, then, were his feelings when he saw a walrus for the first time ? It was a new creature, a new species, or all that had been written about its Atlantic cousin was erroneous. The natives were eagerly questioned : "Is this walrus sick ?" "No, it isn't." "Do they always look like that ?" "Just the same," was the reply. It is, in fact, a distinct and separate animal specifically from its congener of the North Atlantic. It is a melancholy fact, but none the less true, that the walrus, as seen here, is one of the most disgusting-looking objects known to man. It has a raw, naked hide, without hair or fur, covered with a multitude of pustular-looking warts, boils, and pimples, the skin wrinkled in deep, flabby folds, and marked by dark venous lines, which show clearly through the yellowish-brown cuticle which seems to be peeling off with leprosy, altogether a most unwholesome-looking brute, unpleasantly suggesting the appearance we know as "bloated."

They are of tremendous size, ten feet and a half to twelve feet long, and weighing fifteen or sixteen hundred pounds. In water, their motions are not nearly so quiet or graceful as those of the seal and

sea lion, and on land they are almost helpless, for which reason they rarely come outside the surf-wash. They go about in large herds, which now and then emerge to sleep. First one lands and lays itself out, and then a second comes and gives its predecessor a shove, whereupon he moves a little further up; then comes number three who pokes up number two, who prods number one, and so on till the whole herd has got to land; each brute pillowed on the body of the one above him, all without quarrelling, but every movement displaying apathy and phlegm. Its most extraordinary feature is its hide, which over the shoulders and down the throat and chest is three inches thick, and is nowhere less than half-an-inch. It feeds exclusively on shell fish, and the bulbous roots and tender stalks of certain marine plants, which grow abundantly at the bottom of the bays and lagoons of the Alaskan coast; and it is evidently for digging up these that it uses its tusks, and not, as is reported, for the purpose of hauling itself upon ice or rock. Another blow to received opinion is given by Mr. Elliott's testimony as to the cowardice of the brutes. They will snort or blow to any extent in the water, but as to attacking a boat, that is the very last thing that would enter into their heads. It is unfortunate that no females were to be found about the islands. The natives say that the creature is monogamous; that the female brings forth a single calf in June, usually on the ice floes north of Behring's Straits; that it resembles its parents in general character when six weeks old, but that its tusks do not appear till the second year; and that the mother is strongly attached to it and nurses it later in the season in the sea.

The species has a wide range in these latitudes, north of the Aleutian chain, and is hunted on the mainland for its hide and ivory. The former, shaved down considerably, serves to cover boats, whose wooden, whalebone-lashed frame, thus protected, can stand more thumping and pounding against rocks and alongside ship, than any lighter known to seamen. The skin, too, at one time served a purpose that no one would ever dream of, and thus it came about.

In the time of the Russian dominion it was used to cover the packages of furs sent from Sitka to Kiachta in China, the great frontier trading place. It was then stripped off and sewed again over the chests of tea which were received in exchange, and thus found its way to Moscow. There the

soundest portions were finally cut up, and stamped as "Kopecks," a variety of small change, and thus found its way back again to its original home as circulating medium. This sort of currency was long known to the country, and in fact the natives never saw gold and silver coins till the Americans took them there in 1868.

Another use is for harness, for which it is admirably adapted; but, remember, only so long as the weather is cold and dry. If you are caught in a storm the horses will go on and leave you nobody knows how far behind, the traces remaining unbroken, but stretching like so much india-rubber.

The flesh is in great demand among the Eskimos, who live on it and supply all their wants from the carcass, just as the South Sea Islanders do from the palm tree. To the civilised palate the meat is the most abominable known. Even the natives of St. Paul and St. George, who are not fastidious, will not touch it.

There yet remains another animal to be mentioned, one which everybody thinks of in connection with icy regions, known to all of us, by repute at least, and the representative animal of the North Pole—the polar bear; not that they are found so low down as the Pribylova. There are legends of the brute having been killed there, but that is a long time ago, and it must have been an accidental visitor, carried down, most probably, on an ice floe, for the bear cannot stand the high temperature which is so favourable to the seal. To find it at home we must go two hundred miles north of St. Paul to St. Matthew Island, a spot untrodden by human foot since 1810-11, when five Russians and seven Aleuts spent the winter there, and were so stricken with scurvy that all the Russians but one died, and the rest barely recovered, and left early next year. A sad, dreary, inhospitable place is this, but abounding in walrus, thus giving the bear more of his natural food than he knows what to do with. Mr. Elliott and Lieutenant Maynard, U.S.N., landed there in August, and walked over the whole coast-line for the purpose of making a survey. They were prepared from old Russian accounts to find bears—but not hundreds of them, as was the case. They were on the island nine days, and during every instant of daylight were never out of sight of a bear or bears. Dangerous neighbours, you will say. Not a bit of it; they are more afraid of you than you of them. Their sole idea,

old and young, males, females, and cubs, was to get out of the way. Whether they were gorged with food, or the heat made them quiet, it is impossible to say, but the fact is that not one could be induced to show fight. Half-a-dozen were shot, but it was found that they were at the height of the moulting season, and the fur came off in handfuls at the least rub. They never roared or uttered the slightest sound, even when wounded. Their bulk is enormous; one measured eight feet from tip of nose to its excessively short tail, and must have weighed one thousand or twelve hundred pounds. It had a girth of twenty-four inches round the muscles of the forearm, just at the place which corresponds to our wrist. If anyone wants a new excitement in these days of travel, let him find his way to St. Matthew and spend the winter there. He can get any number of skins in the highest state of perfection, and will have no lack of meat, and we are assured that of all meats known to humanity polar bear steak is the finest.

After this little excursion we can return again to the Pribylovs.

It must not be supposed that in St. Paul time hangs heavily on one's hands; to think so is the greatest mistake. Anyone of education and intelligence, and with a disposition to accept his situation and make the best of it, will find plenty to occupy him in observing, recording, and reflecting on the peculiarities of the enormous quantity of life always present during the summer. Enormous, be it understood, outside the amphibians with which, up to now, we have been more particularly concerned. Everyone will anticipate what I am going to mention. The birds are here in millions upon millions, nay, hundreds of millions, and the dreary expanses and lonely solitudes of the North owe their chief enlivenment, and their principal attraction to man, to the vast flocks of water-fowl which repair here annually for the breeding season. In importance they are naturally overshadowed by the mammalia, but to the naturalist and to many who lay no claim to be experts, the habits, character, and description of the numerous species will always be attractive. Here, then, I have a brief notice of the visitors. I give the scientific names as well as the popular for the benefit of the few who may be ornithologists. The latter vary so much according to the locality, that they are often misleading; this cannot occur with the former.

In the first place, fifteen miles of the bold basaltic bluff line of St. George are fairly covered with nesting gulls (*Rissa*), and "arries" (*Uria*), while down in the countless chinks and crannies over the entire surface of the north side of the island, millions of "choochkies" (*Simorhynchus pusillus*) breed, filling the air and darkening the light of day with their cries and fluttering forms. On Walrus Islet the nests of the great white gull of the North (*Larus glaucus*), can be inspected, as well as those of the sea parrot or puffin (*Fratercula* sp.), cormorants (*Graculus* sp.), and the red-legged kittiwake (*Larus brevirostris*). All these can be reached without much difficulty, and afford unequalled opportunities for taking notes during the breeding season, which lasts from early May to end of September. Each and all afford the natives a delightful change from the everlasting seal meat; even the cormorant, rankest of all birds, is a dainty, and all the more appreciated, that it is the only bird which never leaves, even in winter, and thus affords a supply of fresh meat for soups and stews, always wanted by the sick. But the time when the heart of the Aleut swells within him is in July, when he can put his hand on the bluish green, dark brown mottled egg of the "arrie," the thick-billed guillemot. This is one of the most palatable of those found here, being, when fresh, practically equal to our hen's egg, and having no disagreeable flavour whatever. One can form an idea of their plenty from the fact that on one visit six men loaded a boat capable of carrying four tons, beside crew, down to the water's edge with eggs in less than three hours. Good as these are, they are yet surpassed by the eggs of the Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*), which equal those of our duck, although, strange to say, the bird itself is the most disgusting to eat of any, except the cormorant. These birds lay in the most inaccessible places, and the only way of getting them is to hang suspended by a raw-hide rope some hundred feet below the cliff and some hundred feet above the water. One of the natives met his death in the following curious way: He had been successful in securing a large basket of the first eggs of the season, and, anxious to go on, he sent his wife back to the village with his take and swung himself down as before. Nobody thus being at the top, a hungry fox which had been looking on, now ran to the rope and began gnawing it; in a second or two it parted, and the poor fellow was dashed to pieces

on the rocks below. It was afterwards found that some time that morning he had rubbed his yolk-smeared hands on the raw hide, and it was just at that place that the fox gnawed it.

In winter all are absent but the cormorant and a few burgomaster gulls (*Larus glaucus*); but as soon as May opens, the sky is clouded by the millions of arrivals. The face of the cliffs is at once occupied by the "arrie," which lays a single egg on the bare rock, and stands, just like a champagne bottle, straddling over it while hatching. Hundreds of thousands of these birds are thus engaged, packed as close as sardines in a box, each individual uttering an incessant, deep, low, hoarse grunt. The adaptation of Nature to this primitive nesting is very conspicuous. The shell is so tough, that the natives, when collecting, chuck them about as we do potatoes, fill a sack, and then tip it with the customary jerk into the heap, just as we should treat the tuber, and with almost as little damage, very few being crushed or broken.

But the most characteristic bird of the islands is the "choochkie," the knot-billed auk (*Simiorhynchus pusillus*), a little creature three inches long and two inches wide, which comes every year by the million. It is comically indifferent to the presence of man, and will let you get within arm's length, sitting squatted upright, and eyeing you with a peculiar look of mingled wisdom and astonishment. It is one of the sights of St. George to see the morning flight to the sea, and the evening return. Its egg is extraordinarily large, being half as long as itself, and more than half its own width.

The thick-billed guillemot (*Lomvia arra*) is another which appears in countless multitudes. This is in bodily size the exact counterpart of our common duck, except that it cannot walk, or even waddle, as our domestic bird. In morals, too, it is distinctly inferior, for it is always quarrelling with its own species; and not merely by scolding: prompt action is its characteristic. During the breeding season, one may walk over hundreds of these birds which have fallen and dashed themselves to pieces on the rocks, while engaged in deadly combat with their rivals. They seize one another in mid-air, and hold on with their strong mandibles so savagely, that they are blinded to their peril, and strike the earth before they realise their danger.

One of the most extraordinary sights

that can be seen here is afforded by a peculiar habit they have of encircling St. George, which gives us some sort of idea of their excessive number. While the females are sitting, at regular hours in the morning and evening the males go flying round and round the island in great files and platoons, always circling against or quartering on the wind; and during several consecutive hours they form a dark girdle of birds more than a quarter of a mile wide and thirty miles long, flying so thickly together that the wings of one fairly strike against those of the other.

And with this astounding sight we bid farewell to the Pribylovs.

FATE, OR CHANCE?

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

MANY years later, Nelly Dawson, now a middle-aged woman, was sitting one afternoon in her bed-room, turning out an old desk in which she kept her letters. One neatly-tied packet was Mabel Garne's contribution towards the store. Nelly undid the tape, and leisurely went through the correspondence of years. Girlish, romantic effusions, the earlier letters were; the later, more practical and serious. One, written straight from a glowing, happy heart, told the news of her engagement to Captain Lawrence. All had come right, after all; a fortunate chance of explanation had put things straight, and she was the happiest and luckiest girl in the whole world; she was frightened, herself, at her own happiness. The wedding was to take place very soon, and Nelly, of course, must be one of the bridesmaids.

The date of this letter was sixteen years back, and Nelly went off into a brown study over all that had happened since it was written.

She opened another, bearing the Dublin post-mark. It told the news of the death of a little daughter—the only child—and was heartrending in its grief and despair.

Later letters bore the Indian post-mark, and Mabel had now been in India many years.

Nelly fancied that in these she could trace, "between the lines," an undercurrent of bitter feeling and disillusionment. Major Lawrence's name was rarely mentioned, and this omission looked ominous. Poor Mabel! hers was not the temperament to

bear the rubs and frets of life with fortitude; all emotion with her was intensified: happiness was ecstasy; grief, hopeless despair.

Nelly, who had never once seen her old friend since her marriage, often wondered how things were with her, and often thought of her with tender and pitying affection.

She took up another letter. In it, Mabel wrote at length about the strange vision she had seen at the old Manor House. She noted every detail with extreme precision, and asked Nelly to take special care of this description, in case any future event might prove it to have been a warning. At the same time, she begged her friend never to refer to it; she, herself, had determined to try to banish it entirely from her memory.

Looking up from the faded page, Nelly saw a man walking up the avenue. As he came nearer, she could distinguish the local postman with the afternoon letters. Presently her maid knocked at the door and brought them to her; one—a thin, Indian letter—was in Mabel Lawrence's writing!

"What a strange coincidence, just as I was thinking of her!" she said to herself as she opened the envelope.

This was what she read:

"DEAREST NELLY,

"I have for some time past had a very great trouble on my mind, but I did not dare to speak of it to anyone. What I have gone through in keeping it to myself, I could never tell. You will be shocked, dear, to hear of it, and I have so little time in writing before the mail leaves, that I must break it abruptly. My worst fears are true. I am suffering from cancer, and I am coming at once to London to undergo the operation that alone can save my life. A few days after you receive this letter I shall be in town. Rooms will be taken for me in Brook Street, where the operation will be performed.

"Nelly, my dear old friend, do, for Heaven's sake, give me the comfort of your presence.

"Let me have your kind face to look at. Do, pray, pray, come to me. But I know you will not refuse me. I know your kind heart so well.

"My husband cannot leave; I travel with my maid. I will telegraph the address directly I arrive. You will come, won't you!—for the sake of old times.

"Your affectionate friend,

"MABEL."

A deadly foreboding struck, like the chill of an icy hand, to Nelly's heart as she read.

When she was calm enough, she went downstairs to tell the sad news to her sister—their mother had been dead some years—and to make arrangements for going to London.

A week later she was driving up to Brook Street.

She was shown upstairs to the drawing-room. Mabel was lying on the sofa, dozing.

The opening of the door roused her, and, with a cry of mingled delight, love, and anguish, she sprang up, and, flinging her arms round her old friend's neck, sobbed convulsively for some minutes without speaking.

Then she drew Nelly down beside her on to the sofa, and the two women looked at each other with a long, loving, searching glance.

Nelly, living a calm, monotonous, eventless country life, had altered comparatively little. She had grown stouter, and her fresh colour had deepened; but she had never altered the style of her hair, had never changed the style of her dress, and, looking at her, it seemed impossible to Mabel to realise that fifteen years had passed away since they last met.

Nelly, on her part, was shocked beyond description at the change in Mabel. Her face was yellow, thin, worn, and lined; her eyes dull and despairing. She stooped, and her hair was streaked with grey. Mental suffering and the Indian climate had aged her, till she looked at least ten years older than she really was. She seemed to read the thoughts passing through Nelly's mind.

"Yes, I am terribly altered, Nell," she said presently, with a smile more sad and pathetic than any tears. "You look just the same fat, comfortable, dear old thing—you don't look a day older. Kiss me again, dear. Heaven bless you! I knew you would come to me."

"Yes; and I will stay with you as long as you want me, poor darling."

They sat for some time silent, grasping each other's hands.

Nelly's presence seemed to have the old soothing effect upon her unfortunate friend, who was able presently to speak of her trouble, and to talk over the arrangements that had been made.

The operation would take place in four days. One of the first London surgeons had undertaken the case; a physician and

nurse would be in attendance also. All she begged Nelly to do, was to be with her on the day, to remain in the room while the chloroform was administered, and to let hers be the first face she should see when consciousness returned.

"But sometimes I think I shall not wake up again. Once or twice I have had a strong feeling that I shall die under the chloroform."

Nelly tried to reason away the gloomy fears that came so thickly into the poor woman's distracted and terror-stricken mind; and her cheering words and presence certainly worked wonders.

The physician, on calling the next morning, was surprised and pleased at his patient's improved appearance and calmer manner. He recommended a drive in an open carriage, and they went round the Park. The sight of the old familiar spots, so unchanged, touched Mabel inexpressibly. She pointed out, with tears in her eyes, one particular tree under which she had met Alfred, just when she thought everything was over.

Poor woman! Her eyes got feverishly bright; her cheeks flushed with the excitement of living over again the sweet old time of youth, and love, and hope!

"Oh, how happy I was then! how happy I was that day!" she exclaimed. "I knew, the moment he took my hand in his, and looked in my eyes, that he loved me still. To-day, I am like a ghost visiting the haunts of my former life—for all the old things are passed away, Nell," she added, with inexpressible sadness.

Nelly had not ventured to ask her one question about her married life, and she had not once, till this moment, spoken of her husband.

It was evident there was some unhappy estrangement.

The next evening, when they were sitting together in the twilight, the story came out.

Major Lawrence for a long time had neglected his wife, had long ceased to care for her. He was carrying on an unlimited flirtation with a girl who had lately gone out, and who had "made a dead set" at him in the most deliberate fashion. It was the talk of the station.

"If I die, Nell, he will marry her. I want to live so, Nell; not that life holds any possible happiness for me, but to keep her from him. If it were not for that, I would be glad to die, and rest, and not suffer any more. Don't look so horrified;

you don't know what I have gone through, and now it has come to this!"

"Mabel, dear, don't cry so! You break my heart. Poor soul! poor soul!"

Nelly soothed and comforted her as best she could, and this passionate outburst seemed to relieve her; she grew calmer after it, and passed a better night.

The day before that fixed for the operation, she grew more and more restless and excited.

"I felt so strange, driving along to-day," she said. "Everything was so unchanged in the London streets; the same shops, with the same names over them, that I remember before I was married. All the years I was away, the same life going on day after day. It will all be going on just the same to-morrow and the next day. Shall I be alive then, I wonder?"

"I will not have you talk so, Mabel; you are going to put your trust in Heaven, and be a brave woman. You must control these morbid ideas, and help the doctors to do all they can for you, by being calm yourself. You will feel absolutely no pain. Think how merciful that is; and when it is over, and you are strong enough, we will go quietly into the country together, and you will soon get your strength and your looks back again."

"Not to Moreton, darling. Don't think me unkind, Nell, but I couldn't go there. I have never forgotten the agony of those two nights. I could never sleep in that house again."

"I would never ask you to do anything you did not wish. But is it possible you have still such a vivid recollection of that curious fancy of yours?"

"Fancy! it was reality, as truly visible to my eyes then, as you are at this moment. I was haunted by it for years."

"And the man of your dream. Have you ever met him in real life?"

"Thank Heaven, no, for I have always felt that the moment his eyes met mine, my death-warrant would be signed. I have been thinking of him so much just lately, I don't know why. I have never forgotten a feature of his face. I could describe him now."

"What was he like, then? Tell me."

"He was very dark, with a black beard, a face lividly pale; something indescribably sinister and unearthly about the expression of the face; and the eyes—oh, the eyes were horrible!—intensely dark and burning."

"Oh, well, I hope I may never come

across him. He does not sound prepossessing. Was he tall or short? Oh, you could not tell that, of course, for he was driving. Now, I'm not going to let you talk any more rubbish of that kind; I'm going to read to you. Put your feet up, and let me fix this pillow for you."

After a time Mabel dropped off to sleep, lulled by the sweet voice of the reader.

Nelly sat and watched the tired, pathetic sleeping face, so pale and sad, so lined and careworn, and fears began to creep into her heart.

She was awoke that night by a piercing cry, and springing up, found Mabel gasping and wildly agitated. She had been dreaming of that dreadful man again; she had seen his face quite plainly.

"That was because you were talking so much about him this evening, and I am to blame for letting you do it," said Nelly, dreadfully distressed. "Now let me read you off to sleep again, and don't think of that absurd man any more, or I shall get downright angry with you."

The dreaded morning dawned—foggy as November, though it was July; a drizzle falling; the streets greasy with mud; everything gloomy and depressing; the air heavy and stifling.

Mabel had always been excessively sensitive to influences of weather, and this sultry oppression affected her at once. She drooped, and looked faint and exhausted. She sighed heavily, as the hands of the clock crept nearer and nearer to the appointed hour; but Nelly's firmness and composure tranquillised her, and she struggled bravely, and not unsuccessfully, to appear calm.

Everything was in readiness in the room where the operation was to take place, and at last there came a sharp knock at the street-door. Mabel turned deadly pale, and grasped Nelly's hand with a grip that was painful. One or two knocks followed in rapid succession. The ordeal was at hand; the steps of the doctors could be heard coming up the stairs, and their voices in the adjoining room.

The two women sat closely clasped together, listening. Over the mantelpiece there hung an old oil painting, representing our Saviour with the crown of thorns on His brow, with upturned eyes heavy with sorrow and suffering. Mabel fixed a long gaze on it, and her own face grew more calm and resigned.

Presently the nurse came in, and with a quietly firm manner said:

"Everything is ready now, ma'am. Will you come in?"

Still tightly clasping Nelly's hand, Mabel walked in with tolerable firmness. The head surgeon came forward with a few kind and reassuring words. The physician took her hand, and introduced her to two younger men, evidently students, who were standing by with interested faces. On a table near, the instruments were placed, and a cloth had been hastily thrown over them.

In a corner of the room was another man, who had his back towards them, and who seemed busily engaged with something he had taken out of a black bag that was lying open before him. He had not turned round when the patient entered, but still went on with his occupation.

Mabel lay down on the mattress with desperate composure. The surgeon made some enquiry of the man in the corner. It was answered in the affirmative.

"Then we will begin," he said. "This, Mrs. Lawrence, is Mr. Leslie, who will administer the chloroform to you."

The man bowed, and came slowly forward towards the bed.

He was tall, singularly pale, with a black beard, a remarkable expression of face, mysterious and unfathomable, and with the strangest eyes, Nelly thought, she had ever seen. A curious dull light seemed to come from the great pupils.

She was so much engrossed in studying his features, with a vague wonder as to why they seemed familiar to her, that her attention wandered for a minute from the poor patient. Halfway across the large room, he stopped a moment. Then he came straight up to the bed, with his eyes intently fixed on Mabel, as he advanced towards her.

Nelly, who was about to stoop and give her friend one more kiss, and whisper just one last word of hope and encouragement, was horrified, on looking at her face, to see the ghastly change that had come in it. Her eyes were fixed with a fascinated glare on the eyes of the advancing man; every tinge of colour had left her cheeks and lips; her hand in Nelly's grew like ice; her teeth chattered; a tremor passed over her whole frame.

"Mabel, darling, be brave. You will feel nothing; don't fear so; don't give way!"

The poor woman's lips moved, and Nelly stooped down to catch what she said, in spite of the evident disapproval of the surgeon and physician, who were anxious

not to prolong this trying moment. A hoarse voice whispered:

"Save me, Nelly, I shall die! It is the man I saw at your house, the man who drove the hearse! Save me! save me!"

Mr. Leslie was now standing close to the bed, preparing to administer the chloroform.

Nelly, perfectly distracted with conflicting thoughts of what was best to be done, began hurriedly to ask if the operation could not be postponed, if it absolutely must take place to-day. She was sure her friend was not equal to it.

The surgeon looked excessively annoyed.

She was politely begged to leave the room; she was agitating the patient, for whom quiet was essential. Postponement was impossible, as she must be aware.

The door was held open for her. She was fully conscious that her strange manner and extraordinary request, were put down to the violent and hysterical emotion of a tender-hearted woman, unaccustomed to the horrors of an operating room. She still tried to appeal for postponement, urged on by the terror and despair of Mabel's eyes, which seemed to implore her to save her, and which followed her to the door with a dumb, agonised reproach, as the nurse led her away.

She rushed upstairs, and flinging herself down by the side of her bed, prayed frantically and vehemently.

Oh! the long time of suspense and agony! Whose it never end?

She was assailed by the keenest remorse and self-reproach. Ought she not at any cost, to have stopped the operation, to have begged a few words alone with the surgeon, and to have told him of the superstitious terror affecting her poor friend?

Ah, yes! that was what ought to have been done, and now it was too late!

If anything should happen, could she ever forgive herself? She felt almost an accomplice in a murder. The look in Mabel's eyes, as she turned away and left her, would haunt her to her dying day!

The silence below grew horrible. How much longer would it last?

She paced up and down distractedly. It seemed an eternity before she heard the sounds of stir and commotion in the room below—the windows flung open, hurrying feet, an agitated murmur of voices.

Someone ran downstairs very hastily. The street-door opened and closed.

Could it be over?

She leaned over the banisters, and listened with a beating heart and dry lips. There was a knock at the street-door; a quick light step ran up the stairs and into the room. Could anything be wrong? There was a sense of calamity in the very air; it seemed heavy with misfortune.

An idea too terrible to be entertained took deeper root in her mind. She tried to thrust it from her thoughts, but it came back with persistence and added strength. Was it merely a coincidence, that the chloroform administrator resembled so startlingly the man Mabel had seen in her vision, or was it that the vision itself was a warning sent to her?

Mabel's words came back to her: "I have always felt that the moment ^{his eyes} met mine, my death-warrant would be signed!"

The suspense grew intolerable; she could bear it no longer; she crept down stair by stair, and listened.

At last the door opened, and the surgeon came out, looking very pale and distressed. He took her by the hand, and in an agitated manner said: "It is my painful duty to tell you to prepare yourself for very sad news. Your poor friend—^{try} try to be calm! There must have been some latent, unsuspected disease of the heart. All had gone well, when suddenly the pulse ceased. Every possible effort has been made to restore consciousness, but without effect."

"You mean that she is dead!" cried Nelly, in an agonised voice.

"She is dead."

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CONTENTS OF PART 221.

	PAGE		PAGE
No. 957.		No. 959.	
Gretchen. Book III. Chapter I.	241	Gretchen. Book III. Chapter III.	289
Shadows	245	The Folk-lore of Marriage. In Four Parts. Part II.	292
Petroleum	248	Fire!	297
Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Sutherland and		Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Argyle	300
Caithness	252	A Seventeenth-Century Assize	302
Refuges for Spring	258	A Long Reckoning. A Story in Three Parts. Part I.	309
The Old "R.A." A Story in Two Parts. Part I. ...	260		
No. 958.		No. 960.	
Gretchen. Book III. Chapter II.	265	Gretchen. Book III. Chapters IV., V.	315
The Folk-lore of Marriage. In Four Parts. Part I.	268	The Folk-lore of Marriage. In Four Parts. Part III.	320
A Kanaka Royal Family	273	Spring Flowers	323
Forth. A Poem	278	Legs	326
From Stratford to London	278	A Long Reckoning. A Story in Three Parts. Part II.	332
The Old "R.A." A Story in Two Parts. Part II. ...	284		
No. 961.		No. 961.	
Gretchen. Book III. Chapter VI.	337	Compensation. A Poem	351
The Folk-lore of Marriage. In Four Parts. Part IV.	341	A Long Reckoning. A Story in Three Parts.	357
Passion Worn in Vienna	344	Part III.	357
American Tornadoes	347	Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapters I., II.	359

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SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I. "MY LADY DISDAIN."

MEDEHURST ABBEY was a noble and beautiful place—the place of note in the county—and Sir Roy Kenyon, its present owner, was a universal favourite. He was a man of handsome presence and courtly manners, with nothing too great or too distinguished about him to dwarf lesser natures or make ordinary folk uncomfortable. Somewhat epicurean and easy-going in tastes and morals, he liked to take life as he found it, and get as much enjoyment as was compatible with a minimum of trouble. He had no special political principles; he went to church as a concession to respectability, not that he valued its creeds or doctrines, or, for the matter of that, believed in them. He had an unlimited adoration for his only daughter, whose will had been his law from the first moment she had acquired the power of asserting it, and recognised the advantages of so doing.

This daughter, Alexis, was somewhat unpopular among the maids and matrons who openly adored the eligible widower. Those clear, glowing eyes of hers had a knack of making other women feel uncomfortable, or "found out;" and her beauty was in every way so remarkable that they had to acknowledge themselves extinguished whenever she appeared.

To say Alexis Kenyon was "original" was to say very little, and yet she was too unlike all other women to be classified as they would be. Her mother had been a Russian—a beautiful widow—whom Sir Roy had met in his wanderings, and

married in a fit of idolatrous passion, from which he was destined to awake very speedily. He brought her to his English home, which she never liked, and introduced her to his English neighbours and friends, whom she cordially detested, and with whom she made herself extremely unpopular. The marriage was not a happy one, and Sir Roy's constant absences seemed to give grounds for what rumour had already whispered, that he tried to console himself abroad for the absence of the love and peace he assuredly never found at home. His wife had but this one child, to whom he was devotedly attached, and when at last freedom came, she was his constant companion. He took her everywhere. He had her educated in all places and by all sorts of teachers. The result of this system was that she grew up most decidedly "unfeminine," according to the ordinary acceptation of the term. She had a singularly acute and cultivated intellect; was a fearless rider, an indefatigable traveller; could swim, boat, fish, and play billiards as well as any man; and withal had a most delicate and graceful beauty that conveyed the idea of indolence and languor rather than dauntless courage, and almost perfect health.

She could be "grande dame" to her finger-tips when so disposed, and again throw off listlessness and languor in a moment to become eager, fierce, impulsive, wilful, as the fancy of the hour decreed.

She had had lovers innumerable, but they bored more than they diverted her. At three-and-twenty she was heart-whole as a child, and, like a child, regardless of the sufferings caused by her caprices, or the follies committed for her sake. She had travelled a great deal, but though she professed to no weakness of regard for one country or one place more than

another, she had a decided preference for her beautiful English home, and would often be seized with a whim to return to it, just as Sir Roy fancied he was irretrievably committed to a lengthened sojourn in some foreign land.

A whim of this description had brought them back to Medehurst towards the end of June, when everyone imagined they were in America.

She had been crazy to go to America, and had travelled indefatigably through its wonderful cities and magnificent country; but suddenly she discovered that the people were odious, the climate intolerable, the habits and customs vulgar in the extreme, and declared she must go home: it had been idiotcy to come all this distance. Then there was nothing interesting or entertaining to be found; and Sir Roy, listening with his usual good-humoured indulgence, gave the order to return, and, much to his own surprise, found that for once his daughter's inclinations tallied exactly with his own.

They found London hot and crowded, and Alexis thereupon carried her father off to the Abbey, foregoing all the charms and allurements of the season by reason of a sudden caprice for the country. The caprice had lasted for several days. Towards sunset on one of these days she was sauntering, with a troop of dogs at her heels, through the woods that were the glory of the Abbey. Away to the right lay the ruins of the old cloisters, covered thick and close with ivy, where the owls and bats found resting-place. On the other side of the wood was the beautiful beech avenue that led from the lodge to the house, and the girl, as she skirted it, suddenly paused and looked with surprise at a figure advancing rapidly in her direction.

In a moment she had left the shade of the wood, and stood in full sight as the man advanced—a young man, fair and sun-tanned; with a tall, soldierly figure and bearing, that brought a smile of recognition to her lips.

She went towards him with something of surprise as well as of pleasure in her face:

"Neale!" she exclaimed, "what a surprise! Why did you not send word you were coming?"

The young man took her outstretched hand. He did not meet the frank gaze with equal frankness, and a momentary flush crossed his brow and cheek.

"I know," he said, "that you like sur-

prises, and I thought you'd be here as—as town is so hot."

"It was detestable," she admitted. "I was glad to leave it. But how well you look! And your eyes——"

"Yes! they are all right. That German oculist is wonderful."

"You have been a long time away," she said pleasantly, and looking at him in a calm, critical fashion that somewhat discomposed him. "Were you at Vienna all the time?"

"No. I took advantage of my leave and went on to Rome. There was no use coming back. You and Sir Roy were at the Antipodes, as usual——"

"No, not quite so far, only in America. But shall we go on to the house?"

"If you wish. Is your father in? Have you any visitors?"

"Not at present. I believe some people are coming next week—no one you know; and, to answer your first question last, my father is in. I left him in the library going over the steward's accounts."

They turned and moved slowly up the avenue, under the shade of the beautiful leafage.

"You have not said you are glad to see me," remarked the young man presently, as he glanced down at the pale, clear-cut face by his side.

"I am never glad to see anyone—except my father," she answered tranquilly; "and I never tell polite fibs for the sake of politeness. No one can say I am not sincere."

"Sincerity," said her cousin, "is not always agreeable."

"Oh, that is the fault of people who can't bear a little plain speaking."

"Your speaking," he said, laughing, "is generally plain enough. You don't leave a loophole for imagination. How much mischief have you done in these past months?"

"What do you call mischief?" she said. "That is rather your province as a man, when your hands are idle and your days unemployed."

He flushed hotly.

"If it is a man's province, it is a woman's faculty," he said.

"Well, we try to resist; you don't. There's the difference. Why, you look quite guilty. Is it a case of the 'arrow shot at a venture'?"

"Tormenting, as usual," he said, with lightness; but it was forced lightness, and her keen ear detected the false ring in his tones.

"I think," she said gravely, "you must allow I have always been merciful to you. I have looked upon you as a sort of elder brother all my life. Come, be frank. Have you met with any adventures since we last met? Your letters were always most unsatisfactory."

"I was never a good hand at writing," he said, with an effort to appear composed, as he met the merciless raillery of her clear, laughing eyes.

"No; a very stupid hand; but that is begging the question. You know I dislike evasions. I shall really begin to think you have something to conceal."

"You would be wrong then," he said hotly, almost angrily. "But my concerns have never appeared to interest you before, and I fail to see why they should do so now."

"Do you?" she said with a little cold laugh. "It is somewhat inexplicable. Men are like children—they are easily spoilt. Once listen to a child, and he will bore you about himself for ever. Appear interested in a man, and there will be no end to his claims on your patience and forbearance. It is best to nip both in the first bud of attempted confidence."

"I thought you were asking for mine."

"Because you appeared unwilling to give it. Had you been as ready as of yore I should probably never have listened to a word."

"Merciless as ever," said the young man, looking down at the listless, ironical face with as near an approach to dislike as he dared to betray.

He disliked clever women, sharp women, satirical women. Alexis was a wonderful combination of all three. Her manifold contradictions had always puzzled him. Her beauty had never allured, nor her fascination attracted. He had been familiar with them and their effects so long. He had felt a good-humoured contempt for the men who had adored her so madly, and been capable of so many follies for her sake. The merciless raillery; the almost contemptuous coldness; the irony of words and manner; the unfathomable depths of her nature; these were all things well known and, to him, without charm. At present she irritated him in an exceptional degree. Her keen, searching eyes seemed to read his heart; her light laugh stung him to anger. He had almost forgotten her existence; now it reminded him of duty, obligations, sacrifices—all things he most disliked and least desired to have recalled.

"My time," he said, with an effort at unconcern, "has been spent somewhat idly and unprofitably. You cannot wonder at that when you know——"

"That it is nearly three months since your sight was restored, and from that time you appear to have lost all interest in home and friends—to say nothing of relations."

"What folly!" he said impatiently. "I have been knocking about—seeing all sorts of places, that's all. I told you I went to Venice and Rome, and—and all those places sight-seeing. I can't expect you to show any interest in my opinion of them. You know them all by heart."

"Yes," she said quietly; "I think I do. On the whole you have shown consideration in not inflicting me with tourists' rhapsodies. Did you meet any of our mutual friends in the Winter Cities?"

"No."

"The Grahams, I know, were in Venice," she said, glancing at his abstracted face. "I thought you might have run across them."

"And you?" he asked abruptly. "How did you like America? What do you think of it?"

"I thought it very—large," she said gravely. "The people were much the same as the people one meets 'doing' Europe. They always asked an infinitude of questions; they always wanted to know one's family history, and one's family's family history five minutes after an introduction. They were extremely desirous to be communicative, which always bored me; and they were tiresomely good-natured, which always put me in a bad temper."

"I wonder," remarked her cousin, "if you have ever had a good word to say of any place or person that you have seen?"

"Not often," she said laughing. "The places are generally so overpraised beforehand, that they affect me with instantaneous disappointment. The people are horribly uninteresting."

"What would you call 'interesting?'" he asked moodily. "Some melodramatic hero who had committed a murder—or some washed-out genius with a spite against mankind in general."

"Not at all," she said coolly. "I have met both classes, and I assure you they did not interest me in the very least."

"Met a murderer—you?" he scoffed incredulously.

"Yes," she answered with composure.

"He had not absolutely shot or stabbed his victim, but he did as bad—he broke her heart; and she—she killed herself in despair. No one seemed to mind. Society petted him as much as ever. True—he was an Earl's eldest son."

Again that hot flush crept up to the young man's brow.

"Don't talk of such horrors," he said impatiently. "I wish you were more like other girls."

"Thank you for the wish; I don't echo it. Humanity is cut out too much on the same pattern for me not to be grateful that Nature varied it a little in my case."

She looked up at the blue sky with serene indifference. She knew she had ruffled his temper, and that pleased her, and made it easier to keep her own.

"I wonder you came back," she said at last.

He started a little. His thoughts had been travelling far away.

"My uncle wished it," he said.

"Oh! you should not mind papa. I never do."

"That is a dutiful remark, and essentially one of your speeches," said her cousin. "But everyone has not your privileges. I have always obeyed Sir Roy's wishes."

"Yes," she said. "You have. Sometimes I wonder why?"

"Perhaps because I was taught obedience as a duty; perhaps because one so good and generous deserves a little consideration; perhaps——"

"I wouldn't say any more," she interposed, with her little slighting laugh. "Unless you add—perhaps because he is not your father, as he has the misfortune to be mine."

"Alexis," said the young man, "you have certainly been spoilt by over-indulgence. You have never known a care, or a sorrow——"

"That," she interpolated, "may be because I never cared for anyone sufficiently to suffer on their account. You have always told me I am pre-eminently selfish."

"You convey it, I must say. Is it the fault of your temperament, your education, or your nature? I often wonder."

"I am obliged to you for taking the trouble to conjecture anything about me," she said coldly. "But to save you any more cogitation on the subject, I will tell you that it is only the fault of—myself. I believe I was born without a heart. I never suffered from emotion in any shape or form. I am tolerably happy. I have

everything I wish for, and I enjoy life as much as I care to enjoy it."

"And yet I never heard you say you were pleased at anything, or by anything, for any length of time."

"That is only because things in general are so very unsatisfactory, and I am too restless not to like change and variety. I like people and places very well for a week. After that I seem to know everything about them. It is their own fault I prefer anything to monotony."

"I don't envy you your disposition," he said. "Of course you are a very clever person, and all that; but your reading and your studying of character, and your habit of analysing every emotion, and ridiculing anything like deep feeling, have only succeeded in making you cold and cynical, and unlike any other woman. I would rather have my own stupid brains, than your clever ones."

"Like the man with the deformed child, who said at least it was his own. Well, you have the sublime essence of life—content. It is only a few ridiculous people here and there who want to see into the depths of things, and fall out with them because they are only—shallows; only a few dissatisfied souls who cry out against the trumpery, and folly, and wickedness which make up the sum of life. No doubt you are happy, and I am—not. But then I am supremely selfish."

"You make yourself out worse than you are," he said magnanimously. "If you ever fall in love, that will wake the womanhood in your nature."

Her slight, scornful laugh fell across the warm spring air like a chime of bells.

"Thanks for the suggestion. I am not of the Chloe and Phyllis type of feminine nature. I never had and never shall have an atom of sentiment in me."

"Oh," he said good-humouredly, "that is all very fine as yet. Your time will come, as everyone else's has come, or will. You won't laugh, and jest, and sneer at everything then."

"You speak so confidently that I may conclude your 'time' is one of those fortunate experiences," she said, scoffingly. "Allow me to congratulate you. I thought your travels had not been wasted; but, as far as I am concerned, leave my fate out of the question, if you please. Why, how embarrassed you look! Wrong—of course I am wrong. No man ever yet confessed he had been guilty of such folly, unless he was compelled by circumstances. Sometimes

the circumstance is a prospective mother-in-law; sometimes 'les convenances.' Which case is yours? Not the mother-in-law, I hope. She would be sure to be a dreadful foreign person, and as for the fiancée——"

"Alexis, for Heaven's sake hold your tongue."

He spoke so furiously and with such white heat of anger in his face, that the girl involuntarily obeyed him.

"Oh!" she said, coolly; "have I offended you? A thousand pardons. I thought you better-tempered than to fly into a passion at a jest. But, see, there is papa on the lawn. We will say nothing more about the 'circumstance' at present."

SHADOWS.

THE youngest member of our family, a little maid of five years, who is banished to bed at what she considers an absurdly early hour, always demands that a light shall be left in her bed-room. That no "grown-up" confirmation may, even inferentially, be given to the fears which fill her little breast, her desire is granted without question or remark. No allusion is ever made in her hearing to any imaginative terrors that may exist in darkness, so that she will grow up like the other children, perfectly indifferent as to being left with or without a light. A thoughtful senior can, however, perfectly sympathise with her feelings as she leaves the family group in the warm, bright room, to make the long journey upstairs; herself, the nurse, and the handrails casting grotesque shadows by the way. Then to be left alone; those two strong towers of comfort and refuge, father and mother, too far away to arrive in time should any of those vague beings which she fancies near come to harm or even—sufficiently dreadful thought—look upon her!

Yes, truly, she is frightened at shadows; but in this how like to many potent, grave, and reverend "seniors" of ten times her age! Did not the brave and ruthless Richard the Third say, after his visions in the tent on Bosworth Field?—

By the Apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers,
Armed in proof and led by shallow Richmond.

How many of what are called the stern realities of life are, rightly counted, but mere shadows, trifles light as air!

What seems more solid than the wealth of a millionaire? And yet what was it to the great French banker, the owner of many millions, who would sit at the head of his table, lost in thought, and munching a piece of dry bread, while his guests feasted around him; who would drive to his office in the morning, and there work harder and longer than the poorest of his clerks, overpowered with endless worry and anxiety, working like a slave every day of his life, and finally falling dead in harness like an overworked cab-horse? What was his wealth but a shadow?

Does not many a man throw away the substance he possesses in grasping at the shadow of other people's money, to be won by a lucky stroke on the Exchange or the Turf? Does not many a bright youth cast away the solid substance of health and strength in the pursuit of the shadow of pleasure; and, in the mad folly of "seeing life," find himself suddenly face to face with the grim shadow, Death? Have we not often seen how a man will creep with unwearying patience through the many narrow, winding ways of fraud, cunning, and treachery, only to find, as he grasps the much coveted reward, that he clutches at a shadow; and that, like the wizard's money in the tales of the "Arabian Nights," the precious coins of gold and silver prove to be dead leaves and withered rubbish?

There are many kinds of shadows about us, some bringing comfort, others misery; some appealing strongly to our senses, others of which we are quite unconscious. Note that man walking through the crowded streets of the city. Well dressed, rich, respected, he walks with his head up, smiling as he thinks cheerfully of the success of all his plans. There is no hitch anywhere; the wheels of his scheme work smoothly and easily, and he walks along building splendid castles in the air as he traces his future progress from one success to another. But he has a shadow he knows not of. A few yards behind him follows one, in no way distinguishable from the crowd around, noting his every movement, his words, his friends, acquaintances, and favourite haunts. That is his shadow, and a fatal one. He may have more than one such shadow—silent, unobtrusive, vigilant—and ever round and about these lurk, more intangible still, the shadows of exposure, disgrace, punishment, and ruin.

Some men are shadows of others in a very different way. Here is FitzRufus, a

young but rising man in a large public office. His great hope and aim are of some day succeeding his chief, McSenex, and he is fast becoming his shadow. He imitates his walk and his gestures; he adopts his expressions; he has arranged his official room in the same manner; and leans back in his official chair in the same impressive, official way. McSenex, at times, walks with his two hands in the small of his back, grasping his stick, which dangles behind him; and FitzRufus now does the same. McSenex tosses a document to a subordinate as he would throw a penny to beggar. FitzRufus has already acquired the same lofty style. Fitz is a shadow; but he has also his satellites, who are proud to shadow him.

Here is little Johnny Dangle, who is always on the look-out for people whom he thinks it worth while to know or be seen with. Does he see a man gradually working his way upward and emerging from the ordinary crowd, Johnny at once fastens upon him, and it would take an unusual number of slights to shake him off. Johnny, too, has a pleasant way with him, and will do his utmost to be accepted as an admiring friend. Having secured this advantage, he gets known to his new friend's acquaintances, and so mounts upwards with his friendships, gradually dropping his connection with the lower rounds of his ladder as he finds them no longer necessary. Such a shadow as this will grow into an important substance in time and have shadows of his own.

Perhaps the most ridiculous shadow is our poor friend, Tom Snipe. A clerk with an income of about a hundred and fifty pounds a year, he prides himself on his aristocratic appearance, and imagines that his feeble imitations of the Pall Mall saunterer deceive the general public; the sneers and jokes of his fellow clerks he, of course, looks upon as vulgar jealousy.

As we wander through London streets we see on scores of faces the shadows of past lives. Here they come, an endless living stream, face after face, young and old, rich and poor, grave and gay; and how many do we see without their shadows of past crimes or weaknesses, past griefs and troubles, self-indulgence or self-denial, hope or fear, victory or defeat! So we may watch them as they in tens, in hundreds, and in thousands, "come like shadows, so depart."

Shakespeare reminds us of this fact of a

man's sins and sorrows writing themselves upon his face as in a book, when he makes Richard the Second, after his deposition, ask for a mirror that he may see

The very book indeed
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

After dashing the mirror to the ground, he bids Bolingbroke to note

How soon my sorrow hath destroyed my face.

And to the remark,

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroyed
The shadow of your face.

he replies:

These external manners of laments
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
That swells with silence in the tortured soul;
There lies the substance.

When one contemplates the fierce struggles and deadly wounds of the battle of life, the unreal nature of the rewards and prizes men fight for, the extraordinary apportionment of success or failure, the elevation of the foolish, the degradation of the wise, the good fortune of the bad man, the misfortune of the worthy one, we are often led to wonder whether we and our lives are aught but shadows of some greater world and greater life with which we may be some day acquainted.

It seems as though these were the living men,
And we the coloured shadows on the wall.

There are certain shadows which accompany every man through life, shadows of acts, foolish or perhaps criminal, that he may have committed in his youth. Many a one has, by some foolish falsehood, or a first step from the paths of strict honesty, been compelled to cover his first fault by a second, and that by a third, till he finds the one first misdoing has produced a shadow to darken his whole career. Many a road to success at various times opens itself to him, which his abilities and energy may be fully equal to following; but across it there falls that shadow of his past folly, sin, or crime, that makes it either useless or impossible for him to seize the opportunity. He must be content to make his journey in the by-ways of life unnoted and unknown. Perhaps an ill-judged marriage, such as the poet Churchill made in his boyhood, may be the shadow on his life.

Thackeray has made this fate fall upon his Warrington, in "Pendennis." A mistaken marriage on the part of Edward the Fourth led to his quarrel with the King-maker, Warwick, his temporary de-

position, some sanguinary battles, and eventually to the death of Elizabeth Woodville's relatives upon the scaffold. Fearful shadows, these, of one foolish act. Hundreds of cases might be quoted to show that many of the misfortunes of our lives spring from our own mistaken actions. As old Fletcher so aptly puts it,

Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

Some shadows, however, there are that give pleasure. Who has not stood upon some elevated spot on a bright summer's day and noted shadows of the fleecy clouds floating swiftly across the bright green meadows and the golden fields of corn; or watched with pleasure the same shadows giving a deep blue tinge to the bright sparkling green of the sunlit ocean? What is a photograph but a shadow, and to how many a lover has the sun-picture of his lass brought consolation for absence? On the lonely sheep-run, under canvas by the gully, where the gold-seekers work; on fields of war or noble vessel's deck, to many a manly heart has such a shadow been a sweet reminder of happy days past and to come, or a gentle pleading to resist temptation and avoid wrong-doing? How many a poor old mother or anxious father has looked with pride and pleasure on the shadow of their gallant boy doing his duty or fighting for fortune thousands of miles away o'er land and sea? And should he fall by spear or bullet, should he sink under some deadly swamp fever, or be swallowed by the angry wave, how highly prized a treasure is that portrait shadow, perhaps the only one left, and valued accordingly, "far above rubies," more precious than refined gold!

Perhaps the most familiar of all are the shadows on the wall. They have been the amusement of the young, probably, for all time; we remember what subject of fun and amusement they were for our own childhood, and we can listen to the little ones of the present as they prattle and laugh about them now. It is only with a feeling of pain that we can look upon them as a consolation of poverty, for the home must be dreary and wretched indeed to which we can apply the words of gentle Tom Hood's sempstress, who, describing her room, speaks of

A wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there.

Who cannot call to mind how many a

time and oft, when twilight has come upon us, and the family have grouped themselves round the fire—some talking, some silent, some whispering, others musing, the shadows have seemed to cluster together and watch us! Sometimes tales are started, and can there be any more fitting time, or more appropriate setting for a ghost story?—the bright, red glow of the fire in front, and the dim, mysterious half-darkness behind, with the distorted shadows on the walls and ceiling. Longfellow speaks in one of his poems of that hour

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And like phantoms on the wall,
Shadows from the fitful fire-light
Dance upon the parlour wall.

There is a certain kind of shadow portrait; a profile cut out in black paper and pasted on a white ground, examples of which may still be seen in humble homes. Occasionally one may even now come upon a professor of this art of portraiture in the streets of London. These shadows, known as *Silhouettes*, are historical. They derive their name from a French Minister of State, who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, had no more popular remedy against the imminent bankruptcy of the nation than honest, stern economy and reform. The wits of the day ridiculed him by adopting all kinds of ludicrous fashions of economy. They wore coats of the most miserly dimensions, sometimes without sleeves; they abandoned the use of gold snuff-boxes, and replaced them by rough wooden ones. Instead of splendid oil paintings, they had portraits produced by tracing with a pencil the profile of their shadows cast by a candle on white paper. These portraits they named after the minister, *Silhouettes*. But the lurid light of these days cast a fearful shadow on the next generation. These were the evil times of Louis the Fifteenth, and of the hideous shadows thrown by this reign upon the next, perhaps the most prominent was the guillotine. The decent, well-meaning Louis the Sixteenth suffered for the vices of his predecessor, and all Europe fell under the shadow of war and its consequent miseries. The French Tree of Liberty, so freely moistened and nourished with blood, developed into Napoleon, whose shadow rests upon the land to this day.

The fearful shadow of the Revolution was even then apparent to more than one of the philosophers of the time. Bishop Butler, Leibnitz, and Gilbert, predicted it in clear and unmistakeable terms. Rous-

sean distinctly foretold it, and advised the aristocracy to prepare for it, by having their children taught trades. He foresaw the horrors that would ensue from what he spoke of as "inevitable revolutions, when the great should become little, the rich poor, the monarch a subject."

Yet this is not the only historical event to which we may apply the poet Campbell's line—

Coming events cast their shadows before.

The revolt of the American colonies was predicted in 1754 by Lord Orford and many others. The author of "*Piers Plowman*," in the reign of Edward the Third, foretold the fall of the religious houses; and, twenty years before its fulfilment, Erasmus made the same prediction. Sir Thomas More also spoke to his nephew of his fear that they might soon see the day, when they would be glad to make a league and composition with heretics for mutual toleration. The poet George Withers, who lived through the stormy period of the Commonwealth, and took an active part in the military operations, seems to have been impressed with the idea of future events being foreshadowed, judging by his lines—

It may be on that darkness, which they find
Within their hearts, a sudden light hath shined,
Making reflections of some things to come.

Whether foreseen or not, shadows do fall on men and nations; both alike, after, perhaps basking in the sunshine of prosperity, suffer eclipse, or have to face the darkness of decline and extinction. Where are those wondrous cities of the plain of the Euphrates and Tigris, that existed thousands of years before Nineveh or Babylon, and yet are entirely unknown to history, the facts of their being, and of their advanced state of civilisation only coming to light, even now, by the reading of tiles and cylinders of clay which had been hidden in mounds of rubbish hundreds of centuries?

How many other nations, now entirely unknown, have risen to a high pitch of power and glory, to decline and fall, and become less than shadows! As with them, so with us. Our lives are made up by chequered light and shade: happy they who have most of the former. One thing certain is that every man, no matter how favoured of fortune he may be, must at last face the dread journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What light, what life, what realities, what shadows he may meet beyond, no man knoweth.

PETROLEUM.

IN the last half of the nineteenth century, unquestionably the greatest and most wonderful novelty is petroleum. The word "novelty" is hardly adequate for what might be familiarly called the biggest thing on record, the opening out of a new source of light and heat, which can yet be hardly called a discovery or invention—for oil wells have been known and utilised from the earliest ages; utilised, that is, in a local and limited way. The most recent of the great sources of supply, opened out on the shores of the Caspian, is that whose existence has been the longest on record. The fire-temple of Baku, where burns the eternal flame which, tradition says, has lasted from untold ages, is supplied by a natural oil well, and we have the testimony of Messer Marco Polo to the existence of an early oil trade in the same locality. He writes of "a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred ship-loads might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food"—perhaps Marco tried it, and we can imagine the face he made over the experiment. And, with all the resources of modern chemistry, petroleum has not yet been made palatable. But, if not adapted for salads, "'tis good to burn, and is also used to anoint camels that have had the mange." We have just rediscovered the value of petroleum as an unguent; but wandering Tartars knew all about it centuries ago.

As a medicinal oil it was that American petroleum first became known to us, when it had some little repute as a liniment for rheumatic pains. The early French missionaries had met with the oil among the Indians, who called it *Atorontou*, a name that ought to have made its fortune as a patent medicine, had the uses of advertisements then been fully understood. Oil wells, indeed, had been fully noticed and discussed in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky—but nobody thought there was money in them. In sinking wells for brine in those regions, sometimes people would strike oil, and think themselves unlucky in coming across a liquid that was of no use for pickling hogs.

The first impulse towards raising oil came, curiously enough, from England, where oil wells are scarce. They are not altogether unknown, however; and one was discovered at Riddings, in Derbyshire, in a

coal and ironstone region, which attracted the attention of a practical chemist, Mr. James Young, of Glasgow, who succeeded in extracting a marketable oil from the natural product. And, as "Young's Patent," the oil first became known to consumers, taking the name of Paraffin, although the substance originally called paraffin by Reichenbach, who discovered it in 1830 in wood tar, is only one of the residual products of rock oil.

The Derbyshire oil wells, however, were soon exhausted, and Mr. Young transferred his operations to Scotland, and set going the manufacture of oil from bituminous coal, as well as from the schists and shales which had, hitherto, possessed no marketable value. The manufacture of Scotch petroleum still continues, although heavily handicapped, by the cost of production, against the natural product of the American wells.

The Americans soon followed in the business. Petroleum from Oil Creek was successfully tested and employed for lighting at Waltham, Mass., in 1851; but the supply of crude oil was, at that time, but trifling. Still, the matter was not allowed to rest. Samples of the mineral oil were placed in the hands of an eminent chemist, Professor Silliman, of Yale College, and his memorable report became the foundation of an enterprise which has now developed into gigantic proportions. A Newhaven company took up the speculation, an experimental well was sunk in the quiet country, where now stands a busy oil-town of some ten thousand inhabitants. At thirty-three feet below the surface oil was struck, and soon sanguine prospectors were boring and testing in all directions. Only thirty years have elapsed since then, but what fortunes have been made and lost! what towns and cities have sprung up in the wonderful, but not very enviable, oil-country! For one cannot hail the progress of petroleum with any enthusiastic joy. All the processes connected with it are dismal, evil-smelling, and more or less dangerous. We read of terrible explosions among oil wells, of unhappy creatures caught and wrapped in a sheet of fire, and frizzling up without possibility of human aid. Sometimes it is an oil tank that explodes—one of those huge reservoirs that may hold twenty, fifty, a hundred thousand gallons. Such an one is now and then fired accidentally, or, perhaps, struck by lightning; then there is a scene such as imagination may

conceive in an Inferno. The wonder is that accidents are not more common, with such elements of danger rendered familiar by constant use. Not that the oil country can claim any monopoly of such dangers, they are brought to our own doors; but if we in England are not careful enough about the storage and distribution of such incendiary stores, we are infinitely more careful than the go-a-head Americans, who feel that they have got to make dollars out of oil, and that it is a minor question whether they are boiled or frizzled in the process.

There is nothing permanent in the oil country. The life of a well, even, is a short and dreary one; the space of five years often sees it pumped out. And thus, while cities rise like magic in a few score nights, other settlements are abandoned, and harvests wave over the sites of market places and exchanges. There is Oil City itself, the titular metropolis of the petroleum country, but no longer in the centre of production. Oil City lives rather upon its ancient reputation. It was settled in 1862, and incorporated in 1871; and is now rather in the way of buying and selling, and speculating, than in actually producing oil. It has its brokers, its dealers and refiners, who meet in a handsome Exchange, and discuss oil in all its bearings; it has a large opera house, schools, banks, daily and weekly papers, and twenty hotels well frequented by oil buyers. But Oil City was comparatively ancient when Bradford came into existence.

The oil-bearing rock runs generally in narrow parallel belts, and, belonging to the more ancient geological series, does not follow the existing configuration of the surface; and for speculators and prospectors who can once get upon the oil line and follow it into untried regions, success brings untold wealth. In this way the trail was followed, skipping hill and forest, to distant Bradford, a hamlet of scattered farm-houses, which forthwith sprang into being as a city, now fully equipped with banks, churches, schools, opera house, two daily and three weekly papers. Here are a hundred and twenty-five oil-producing firms; eleven who make oil-well notions of all kinds; tank factories; boiler shops; saw-mills; nitro-glycerine works; torpedo works; sucker-rod manufactories; producers of every kind of equipment for boring and maintaining oil wells; while pipe lines, stretching to the seaboard, carry away the oil in one continued

stream. Here, too, is a gas supply, which lights the whole city, drawn from a well that pours out the ready-made gas all gratis and for nothing.

The art of well-sinking has naturally attained to high perfection in the oil regions. The ground once tested by an experimental, or wild-cat well, and found to be sufficiently rich in oil, is presently occupied at regular distances by huge derricks, seventy feet high. Each derrick has its attendant steam-engine stationed at a respectful distance, lest an outburst of inflammable gas should occur and become ignited by the engine fires. A sharp steel augur is employed—a set of augurs rather, which are kept constantly sharpened and do duty in succession.

Our primitive notions of a well as a wide-mouthed orifice in which buckets ascend and descend, are not applicable to an oil well, which is only six inches or so in diameter, and drilled with mathematical accuracy. An ingenious system of hollow rods, strung upon a strong cable, transmit the engine power to the boring tool. An iron-casing pipe is fitted accurately into the well to a point below the surface-water of the surrounding district; and, when the oil-bearing stratum is reached and oil begins to ooze in, an operation ensues of a highly sensational character. It is not enough for the oil to ooze, it must flow in a full stream, and, to fairly start the well, it must be torpedoed.

This process accounts for the nitro-glycerine works and torpedo works to be found in our model oil city. For the torpedo is a charge of many gallons of nitro-glycerine contained in tin cylinders and carefully lowered to the bottom of the well. Here we are reminded of that wonderful piece of ordnance imagined by Jules Verne in the "Voyage to the Moon," and probably could an adequate projectile be contrived, it might be expected to knock a hole in the zenith and take its place among the shooting stars. In plain fact, however, the pressure of the atmosphere is sufficient to tamp the charge, which, in exploding, diffuses its force in the surrounding oil bed, violently compressing all its liquid stores. Little is felt of the explosion at the surface—a few minutes follow of silence and suspense, and then with an awful roar, shot forth by imprisoned forces, comes a geyser spout of oil and steam and fragments springing up a hundred feet into the air. When the disturbance is over, a two-inch pipe is inserted,

reaching to the bottom, and an india-rubber plug around the pipe chokes the bore of the well at a sufficient distance from the bottom. In this way the expansive force of the liberated gases drives the oil to the surface, acting in the same way as in our mineral-water syphons, so that in the first period of its existence the oil spouts forth in the form of a perennial spring. In time, however, the imprisoned gases lose their force, and the sucker-rod manufacturer is at hand to supply the necessary machinery for pumping. As years go on the supply begins to fall off; all the wells in the neighbourhood suffer in a similar way; and then the only resource for the adventurer is to start a public company to exploit the failing supply, and retire with all the spoils that can be secured.

But as long as the oil flows merrily, there is no difficulty or trouble in disposing of it. And here come in the pipe lines—enormous networks of iron tubing stretching over the country for hundreds of miles, with a termination at the nearest sea-port. Independent branches run from the different oil wells, and on reaching a main line junction the oil is measured and tested before it is passed in, and a certificate of the quantity received is given by an officer of the pipe company. This certificate passes from hand to hand, and can be negotiated and turned into cash without difficulty. On the strength of these certificates the oil they represent can be drawn from any of the tanks of the pipe company, subject to small charges for transit and storage.

A considerable proportion of crude oil is treated in the oil districts in huge refineries, which sometimes have their own pipe lines and enormous storage tanks. The process of distillation is carried on in huge cylinders through which is driven superheated steam. The first more volatile products are of a highly inflammable and dangerous nature, such as benzoline, gasoline, and naphtha; when these are secured, distillation begins for illuminating oil, which is dangerous or safe according to its flashing point, the temperature, that is, at which it gives out inflammable gases. The higher the temperature at which this gas is evolved, the safer of course is the oil.

The refined petroleum—the ordinary lamp-oil of America—is generally known as kerosine in America. In England we have clung to the somewhat inappropriate name of paraffin; the French, more logically, use the descriptive *petrole*; and the Germans, in their own vernacular, speak

of earth or rock oil. Then there are fancy varieties, such as solar oil, with a higher flashing point and greater density, and many others that half-conceal their connection with the "Old Rock" under fashionable titles. But only three varieties are known to the wholesale trade—namely, water white, standard, and prime; and one or other of these qualities will be found expressed on all those hundreds of thousands of blue and white American casks which reach our shores.

The admirable organisation of the American oil industry, with the labour-saving contrivances in which American invention distinguishes itself, gives the command of the market to the transatlantic product. But a formidable rivalry of supply has sprung up on the shores of the Caspian. About Baku and its ancient fire temple, the rich oil-bearing region has everywhere been pierced and bored. The supply is enormous, but the costs of transport and storage are still so high that the Caspian oil wells have hardly made a great financial success. It is curious to read of a petroleum congress at Baku, attended by Tartars in their lambskin caps, sleek Armenians, and Persians in flowered robes. A very practical congress, however, that discussed railway rates and port charges, and proposed a pipe line, after the American plan, to run the crude oil from Baku to Batoum—the latter being now the great port for petroleum.

From Batoum sailed the *Petriana* for Liverpool, a tank ship newly constructed for conveying the oil in bulk. She discharged her cargo at Birkenhead; the ship was empty, in fact, when a number of engineers and fitters descended into the fore oil tank to inspect and overhaul it. Unhappily, familiarity with danger had bred contempt—naked lights were used, and presently a terrible explosion occurred; a sheet of flame shot up towards the sky, reaching as high as the mastsheads, and scorching sails and rigging. Heart-rending cries were heard from the tank, whilst some of the workmen in flames rushed up the ladders to the deck. Yet, although the flames burnt fiercely for four or five minutes, the ship was not set on fire or seriously damaged. But half a dozen valuable lives were lost—a sacrifice which it almost seems as if the genius or demon of petroleum exacts as an installation of every new enterprise.

Such are the dangers of the tank system; but, on the other hand, where

there are proper appliances for running the oil from tanks in the ship to tanks on the shore, as is the case in some of the Thames wharves—where only incandescent electric lights are used—the plan seems safer than the discharge of a cargo of barrels. A load of half-a-dozen barrels of petroleum jolting through the streets of London in an oil merchant's cart suggests possibilities of disaster that make one shudder. Some may remember the *Abergele catastrophe* of twenty years ago, when an express train ran into a truck-load of petroleum in casks, and a number of unhappy passengers were scorched to cinders.

It would be easy to multiply dreadful stories of the victims of petroleum; hardly a week elapses without some fatal accident caused by the explosion or oversetting of a lamp, and yet mineral oil holds its own as giving the one cheap convenient universal light for which the world has been waiting long enough. In 1883, for instance, according to the Customs reports, the importation of petroleum was seventy million gallons, at a declared value of two million pounds sterling, and the consumption is increasing year by year. Perhaps in this country, coal gas, were it sold at competitive prices, would prove as economical, where available. But under present conditions of practical monopoly, petroleum has the advantage. And in the newly-built streets of houses, intended for middle-class people and artisans, where gas is brought to the door, petroleum is in most cases preferred. For one thing the installation of gas is absurdly expensive, the fittings are costly, and involve a serious loss at every fitting. An excellent petroleum lamp may be bought for a few shillings—the reading lamps with circular burners, for instance, the Berlin burners of the trade, with shades and everything complete, for two shillings. And if the lamp is kept clean and the right end upwards, it is as safe as the best. But the suspension lamps, which in Germany are so cheap and good, and which keep out of the way of damage, have not here been popularised.

A witness to the popularity of petroleum is afforded by the itinerant vendor of oil. An oil walk is becoming as profitable in its way as a milk walk, and the cry of the vendor "Hoil, 'ny oil," brings to the door whole rows of householders, or lodgers—the wives, the daughters, the sisters, the mothers-in-law, all the female entourage, in fact, of the artisan busy in some far-off work-

shop—with bottles, cans, milk jugs, and other receptacles, to take in the half-weekly supply. Sometimes the vendor—we must not call him oilman—"Hoilmen, indeed," cried an indignant shopkeeper, a member of the regular trade, "don't call them hoilmen, they're 'awkers;" but anyhow, whether oilman or hawker, he is sometimes the possessor of a pony and a smart little cart, and even deals in lamps, and wicks, and glasses, and the oddments that comprise an oilman's sundries.

And when we get beyond the limits of towns and gas-pipes, everybody, gentle and simple, finds the best source of light in petroleum. In the hall it is probably endowed with a fine name, and costs twice as much as in the cottage. It has been treated to more sulphuric acid and more caustic soda, but it comes out of the same oil well, and the one probably gives as good a light as the other.

If we go in search of the great dépôts of the commodity, the search will take us into very dreary regions. There is a cut or navigation that leads from Limehouse Basin to the river Lea, with a black and cindery towpath on one side, and a slimy black wall on the other, with foundations rising from the mud sludge below. Even now with the tide rushing, and almost at its full force, the water is neither clear nor savoury; and what must it be at low tide when the stench from the mud mingle with the strong odours from the manufactories on either hand? In this neighbourhood we shall come across the petroleum wharf, with its storehouses ranged with hundreds of barrels, or perhaps a great tank that will hold ever so many thousand gallons. Here rises an enormous pyramid of empty barrels, others are floating in the pools left by a recent high tide. Light carts drive up to the landward side piled high with more empty barrels, vans and luries are waiting to carry off their load of full ones to the stores of merchants and dealers. Other dépôts are on the big river itself lower down, among the creeks and marshes of Essex, wharves where battered, rusty-looking steamers, that have been buffeted by Atlantic waves, haul alongside and discharge their perilous cargoes. Assuredly we are using up the hoarded treasures of Nature at a famous rate.

And though the sources of supply are great, they are not inexhaustible. Certainly, when we hear of an oil fountain bursting out in Baku, and almost drowning

the neighbourhood, we may think that supply is altogether distancing demand. But unless, which is not impossible, there is a manufacturing process actively going on in the bowels of the earth, the exhaustion of present supplies is within a measurable distance. At Baku, ten years ago, oil was plentiful at two hundred feet below the surface; now, a depth of five hundred feet is required to reach the supply. The short life of an American well has already been noticed. On the other hand, yet undiscovered oil regions are awaiting the explorer in every part of the globe. The shores of the Persian Gulf and of the Red Sea, Beloochistan and Afghanistan, have all been suggested as likely sources of supply. The wildest of men can be tamed by showing them how to make dollars; and men of every clime will unite in that delightful occupation. Already oil has been struck in New Zealand, and the beautiful country of the Maories may henceforth be transformed—it will hardly be improved—by oil wells and refineries. But we seem to have opened the last bin—or, some might suggest, the seventh vial—we cannot expect to find much below petroleum, unless, indeed, we succeed in tapping the supplies of central heat.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

SUTHERLAND AND CAITHNESS.

THERE is a peculiar interest about the early records of Caithness, inasmuch as its inhabitants seem to have sprung from a different source to the rest of the land of the Gael. It may be doubted whether the country was ever thoroughly Gaelic. The earliest settlers in this Northern land are dimly reported as Cornavii; and if we may identify these with a people of the same generic name, largely scattered through the middle regions of Britain, they were probably a non-Celtic race, a people much given to handicraft, and skilled in the working of metals. Into this barren corner of the land they were probably driven by the more prolific and pugnacious Gael. The land is not unkindly after all, and when its now barren moors were clothed with forest—as appears to have once been the case—the aspect and climate of the country were less austere.

As a refuge for a beleaguered people, Caithness is admirably adapted, being cut off from the rest of Scotland by a strong

mountain ridge, rising from almost impenetrable morasses.

Until the beginning of the present century almost the only practicable pass into Caithness, from the south, was that over the mountain of Ord, a height which rises abruptly from the sea, with a narrow path not without its dangers even for the practised mountaineer, and which a handful of men could have held against an army.

As might be expected from its secluded position, Caithness abounds in the relics of a primeval people. Stone implements are found in plenty, and the burial mounds of a race that has passed away; circular forts and dwellings, rude entrenchments and ancient cairns, appear on every commanding spot. Possibly the descendants of the people who raised these archaic memorials are still existing among the cottars and fishermen of the coast; perhaps they disappeared altogether before improvers of their own particular period. Anyhow, a critical examination of skulls and bones has resulted in the discovery that this primeval people were not widely different in frame and cranial capacity from our noble selves. It is curious to note that in all Caithness there is hardly a Celtic name to stream, or glen, or mount. Most of the names are Norse, and, no doubt, bear witness to the Scandinavian conquest.

While the region was well defended on the side of the land, the sea was open to the rovers from the Baltic, and, at the beginning of the tenth century, Sigurd, the Norwegian Jarl of Orkney, invaded and conquered Caithness, and extended the influence of the Scandinavian over the adjoining regions. Then Sutherland received its name. It was the Souther land for these Northern Vikings, and hence we have such names as Helmsdale and Armadale replacing the familiar straths and glens; while the Gaelic reaction is shown in such a redundant description as Strath Halladale. Capes and promontories received their names in the rough Norse tongue: there is a Holborn Head, looking over the wild firth; and Dunnet Head missed narrowly being called Dungeness.

For nearly three centuries Caithness and Sutherland remained, as it were, outlying parts of the Norwegian dominions; and then, in the year 1196, William the Lion, who, during his long reign had done much to extend the supremacy of the Scottish crown, crossed the river Oykel, the frontier of this Norwegian land, and received the submission of its chiefs.

The most numerous and powerful race from that time both in Sutherland and Caithness were the Guns—a sept, or family, which traced its descent from the Norwegian Kings of Man.

Olave, King of Man, according to these Norse pedigrees, had three sons by his third wife; the eldest, Guin (the name being Celtic and meaning white, or fair) in allusion to the flaxen locks of the strangers; and this Guin became the progenitor of the Guns. A second son of Olave's was named Lleod, or grey, and was the ancestor of the Macleoda. The third son, Leaundris, was forefather to the Gillanders, or Saundersons, who, for some occult reason have, as "Sandie," become typical of the Scot. In spite of their Norwegian blood, however, these families soon became Gaelic themselves, absorbing their Gaelic neighbours by conquest or adoption, in language, and manners, and dress.

The principal seat of the Guns was the Castle of Halbury, at Easter Clythe in Caithness, otherwise known as Crowner Gun's Castle. This Crowner Gun was a redoubtable chieftain, who flourished in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Although far from being a law-abiding character, Crowner Gun was proud of the office he bore, which resembled that of sheriff in its then prerogatives; proud, too, of the brooch he wore as his badge of office. As for inquests *de mortuis*, the Crowner was rather in the way of providing subjects for them than of holding them, especially where the Keiths were in question, a tribe with whom the Guns were in deadly feud.

This quarrel was in the blood; there was no getting rid of it. The priests tried to make it up in vain. They brought the Chiefs before the altar; the Chiefs owned their Christian duties, and had almost joined hands in friendship. Then the echo of some taunting verse came between them—some memory of mutual injury—and the heathen gods proved stronger than the crucifix above the altar. Yet both sides recognised the necessity of settling the matter in some way, as mutual ravages were bringing both sides to the brink of starvation. Thus it was agreed, in the spirit of ancient Rome, to decide the question of supremacy by a battle between chosen champions, twelve of a side. Already times had changed so much that it was no longer possible to fight like Clan Chattan and Clankay, in open lists, with the King and his Lords for spectators and

umpires; and hence it was agreed to meet at a secret and desert place known only to the combatants, where the fight might be decided without interruption.

The Guns and the Keiths, then—the chosen champions, that is, of their tribes—met by the side of a lonely burn, called Alt-na-gawn, below the Glut of Strathmore. The twelve Guns, all stalwart men, appeared: the chiefs in gleaming armour, the rest with long swords, and targets, mounted on the wiry little horses of the district. The Keiths at the same moment appeared over the hill—twelve horses. But, ah the treachery of it! As they approached, it was seen that each horse carried a double burden. Still, though overmatched two to one, the Guns disdained to fly. Back to back, shoulder to shoulder, they fought, hewing down their foes with sweeping strokes. But the Keiths were no children, and the force of numbers soon prevailed. The Crouner was beaten down and killed, and presently all his party were slain, excepting his five sons, all badly wounded, who held together, incapable of offensive movement, but prepared to sell their lives dearly. But the Keiths had fought enough, and drew off with banners displayed, and all the spoils of war—the horses, the arms of the vanquished, which they had stripped from the dead, and, above all, the Crouner's famous brooch. And soon they reached Dilred Castle, the abode of a friendly chief, and there found rest and refreshment, and rude medicaments for their wounds.

The five brothers made a sad bivouac that night by the side of a lonely burn, where they washed their wounds and talked sullenly of plans of vengeance. The thought that their father's arms were lost, his shirt of mail, his sword and helmet, and that his badge of office, the brooch from which he had acquired his Gaelic sobriquet, all remaining in the hands of their hated foes—filled their minds with shame and anguish. The elder sons were too severely wounded to move from their lairs among the heather, but Henry, a younger one, swore that he would avenge his father's death and win back the trophies of victory, or perish in the attempt. Another brother accompanied him; and, tracking the path followed by their foes, the two brothers presently found themselves at the gate of Dilred Castle. There they found everybody engaged in rough festivity, and in the hall, where the windows were all wide open, the Keiths, gathered around

the central fire, were drinking ale in huge draughts, and loudly boasting and recounting the events of the day. Young Henry, unseen in the darkness, watched the revellers with evil eye, as he fitted an arrow to his unerring bow. Presently the chief of the Keiths detached himself from the group and passed within range, when Henry drew his bow and sent an arrow to his heart, exclaiming in a voice of triumph, an exclamation which has since become a popular saying:

"Iomach gar a Guinach gu Kaigh!"

This sounds very terrible in Gaelic, even if one does not understand it, but it loses much in translation, being rendered simply as, "The compliments of Gun to Keith." Anyhow, the Keiths, imagining that the whole tribe of Guns were upon them, dispersed in flight, pursued by the avenging arrows of the brothers; and the pair, having possessed themselves of the paternal arms and the royal badge, joined their brethren in safety at their rendezvous by the mountain burn.

All the five brothers eventually, it is asserted, founded powerful septs. The sons of James took the name of MacKeamish, which signifies the same thing. From William sprang the Wilsons; Henry founded the line of Hendersons; Robin was the ancestor of the Robsons; while the Macleans owned themselves in Gaelic as the sons of John.

A splendid race were the men of Kil-donan; where the MacKeamish settled about the principal dwelling-house of their chief at Killernan—the tallest and handsomest fellows in Sutherland, by all accounts. A hundred years ago, five hundred strapping fellows could have been mustered in the glen, none below six feet in height, and powerful of their inches. Now only sheep and deer are to be found there.

From the earliest days of the Scottish monarch, it was the policy of the Crown to assign to their personal followers, generally of the Norman race, lordships and fiefs among the still practically independent regions, which were occupied by the Gaelic tribes. And it is characteristic of Gaels, as well as of Celts in general, that they unite more freely and firmly under the rule of a stranger than under one of their own blood. But in Caithness there was the curious meeting of two streams issuing from the same mother country—cousins, many of them, and neither genealogically nor historically far removed. The Jarls of Rouen and Caen,

and the Jarls of Caithness and Orkney were really near akin, but it is doubtful whether they recognised the fact, divided as they were by difference of language and customs. The origin, even of the ruling families of the two countries, is doubtful; whether they were Northmen from Normandy, who replaced the original Scandinavian stock, or these last who assumed Norman names. Anyhow, while the earlier family names disappear or fall into the background, Sinclairs, Sutherlands, and Keiths come to the front, as chief feudatories of the Crown. The Sinclairs soon became practically Lords of Caithness, and in 1455 received titular supremacy as Earls of Caithness and Barons Berriedale. They were a turbulent race, and early in the following century, the Earl of the period was in disgrace and under forfeiture, although he still remained in possession. Then came news that King James the Fourth was assembling all his power for an invasion of England, and the Earl determined to raise the men of Caithness and join the invading force. The Sinclairs crossed the black mountain of Ord, as was long recounted in song and story, on a Monday, and clad in green tartan, marching with all the pride and enthusiasm of Highland warriors, they reached the King's camp on the eve of Flodden. The King marked the welcome reinforcement, and when he learnt that it was the disgraced Earl who had thus joined him in his hour of need, he sent for Caithness and embraced him, and ordered that a Charter of full remission of all pains and penalties should instantly be made out. There were lawyers enough in camp to draw up the deed, for many of these had donned harness and buff coat, and had followed the King to the field; but there was not a scrap of parchment—and the charter was hastily engrossed upon a drumhead, the sheepskin cut out, and handed to the Earl. A faithful henchman was despatched that night from the camp to take the charter back to Caithness, and place it in safety. And this messenger was the only man who recrossed the mountain of Ord of all the brave fellows who had marched over it so proudly. The rest were all killed on Flodden Field next day, and there was mourning presently in all Caithness.

For centuries afterwards, none of the Sinclairs would ever cross the mountains on a Monday, or wear a tartan whose pattern contained a shred of the ill-omened colour—green.

The son of the hero of the Flodden episode was himself slain in 1529, in a less glorious combat. Some dispute as to the guardianship of a Castle in the Isle of Orkney, led the Earl to invade the mainland of the islands with five hundred men. A witch was of the party, a representative of the Fates, who marched in front with a coil of red and blue string, to read the omens of the coming struggle. The result she announced to the breathless Sinclairs, if not in the exact words of the Hermit Monk in Scott's "Lady of the Lake," anyhow to the same effect:

Which spills the foremost foeman's life,
That party conquers in the strife.

The importance of first blood, as an omen of victory, came down even to the unromantic, if still superstitious, prize-fighter of modern times. The Sinclairs interpreted the oracle in a terribly cruel fashion. Capturing a lad engaged in tending sheep or cattle on the hills, they forthwith killed him, a human sacrifice to their heathenish superstitions. And then it was found how desperately deceitful are the oracles of fate; or, at all events, how destiny must have its way in spite of all human precautions. For the body of the herd boy was presently recognised as one of the Sinclair tribe who had run away, or sailed away rather, from Caithness, and had taken service in the Isles. So it was clear that a sad mistake had been made, and a gloom was cast over the camp.

As the Sinclairs advanced, the inhabitants gathered to assail them, and when the invaders reached Summerdale, they found themselves confronted by a large body of islanders, strong, stalwart men, but indifferently armed, many with only sharpened stakes as offensive weapons. But the ground was thickly strewn with large stones, of which the islanders at once availed themselves, and pelted their adversaries with all their might. Helmet and shirt of mail were of no defence against the hurtling shower of stones. Down went the foremost of the Sinclairs, and after struggling for a while against the storm of primeval missiles, the rest turned and fled, pursued by the enraged islanders, who gave no quarter, and, cutting off the enemy from their galleys, left not a soul alive to tell the tale of disaster.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, when the rest of Scotland was in the throes of the Cameronian disturbances—it was the year in which Archbishop Sharpe was murdered, and Claverhouse took the

field against the sectaries—the land of Caithness was agitated by its own troubles, which were not of a religious nature. Some years previously, the Earldom of Sinclair—or at all events the reversion of it—had been sold by its incumbent to Campbell of Glenorchie. The curious transaction had, it seems, been confirmed by royal grant, and Campbell, to make things surer, had married the widow of the recently deceased Earl. But the Sinclairs in general were not disposed to acquiesce in this usurpation, and Campbell set out with seven hundred Argyle Highlanders to claim, or if necessary to conquer by force of arms, his disputed Earldom. For this march, it is said, was composed the appropriate air of “The Campbells are coming” with the pibroch, celebrated among the clans, “The Braes of Glenorchie.”

The Sinclairs were not well served by their intelligence department, or they might easily have made “a new Thermopylæ” of the perilous defile across the mountain of Ord. As it was, the Campbells passed safely over the mountain barrier and descended into the plain. The Sinclairs had gathered near Wick, and a battle was fought near the ancient sea-port, on the banks of the river Altamarlach. The result was doubtful, and a truce was agreed upon. Eventually, Campbell withdrew his claim to Caithness, and was created Earl of Breadalbane in compensation, while the Earldom of Caithness was confirmed to the right heir of the first Earl.

Barely a century passes, and we shall hardly recognise the race of fighting turbulent Sinclairs. Here is Sir John Sinclair, for instance, of Ulbster; the model agriculturist; the improving landlord; the author of essays and pamphlets without end; the most indefatigable man in Europe; “the man of the largest acquaintance;” at all events, the friend of all the leading statesmen of Great Britain.

Sir John Sinclair was born in 1754 at Thurso Castle, then a rambling old building looking over the stormy Pentland Firth. “Fish have been caught with a line from the drawing-room window, and vessels wrecked so close under the turrets, that the voices of the drowning sailors could be heard.” At that time there was nothing like a road in Caithness—people followed the sheep-tracks over the hills; and if some local grandee attempted a journey in a coach and six, twenty or thirty sturdy Highlanders attended it, to help it along in the dangerous places.

When Pennant visited Caithness, he wrote that scarcely any farmer in the county owned a wheel-cart, and burdens were conveyed on the backs of women, thirty or forty of whom might be seen in a line carrying heavy wicker creels.

With restless energy this man of many projects was soon at work to change the face of the country. “Can you carry a road over the hill of Ben Cheilt?” asked the old-fashioned landlords in scorn, when he proposed a road through the mountain barrier of Caithness. Sir John mustered over twelve hundred labourers, and working from dawn to dark, a road was made passable for wheeled carriages in a single day. Owning a sixth part of the whole county, he set to work to improve his own estate, introducing improved methods of agriculture; introducing also the Cheviot sheep which was to replace the hardy Highland cottar. But Sir John was not a ruthless depopulator. “Though extremely anxious,” he writes, “to establish the system of sheep-farming, yet I was very unwilling to part with the small farmers. I therefore proposed to them to take lots of land, amounting in general to about two acres, besides the privilege of pasturing their cattle on the neighbouring hill. No plan could answer better. The arable land they occupy is brought into regular fields; their exertion in the cultivation of waste lands is hardly to be credited; the idle and useless have become active and industrious.”

Opinions may differ as to the benefits of wide changes such as Sir John effected; but the man himself was no doubt actuated by better motives than that of merely increasing his rent-roll. There was a spirit, too, about him that recalls his less cultivated ancestors. In 1794, Sir John raised a regiment, called the Rothesay and Caithness Regiment, mustering full a thousand men, on his own estates: this regiment he commanded himself, serving with it for eight years in various parts of Scotland and Ireland. One of his chief difficulties with his men was to prevent their starving themselves in order to send home money to their families in Caithness. Truly there is something to be regretted in the loss of a race of so noble and simple a type.

One of the chief memorials of Sir John Sinclair’s energies is the “Statistical Account of Scotland,” originally compiled at his instigation from reports furnished from each parish throughout the country—generally by the minister of the parish—

forming a mass of local information, history and tradition, which has been the basis of most of the works since published. Sir John's daughter, Catherine Sinclair, also became well known as an author, producing among many almost forgotten novels and stories, the book for children called "Holiday House," the first practical protest against the excessive primness and goodness of the juvenile literature of that period.

There is a certain difference in character between the lands of Caithness and Sutherland. The latter is wild and sterile exceedingly; the hills are bare rock, where hardly the lichen can find a hold; the pastures are mossy and moorish; the plains boggy and wet; and yet there are pleasant straths and glens here and there, green plantations and sparkling lochs innumerable.

The history of the county is mainly the history of its chief Lords, whose pedigree—if not without dispute, yet, with general consent—begins with a certain Hugh Freskin, son of Freskin of Moray, who received the Thanedom of the district at the hands of the Scottish King. Hugh's son was created Earl of Sutherland A.D. 1228, and the line ran on without interruption till the death of John, the ninth Earl, A.D. 1514. Earl John's sister had married the second son of the Earl of Huntly, and thus the Gordons made good a footing in the county. Before the Gordons came, the Mackays were the principal clan in the county, as the worthy minister of Farr records in his contribution to the "Statistical Abstract": "About four hundred years ago"—the good man prudently does not commit himself to dates—"the Mackays began to make themselves conspicuous in this district as a clan."

Farr and Strathnaver were the principal residences of the Mackays, a branch of which was ennobled as the Lords of Reay, a land noted for its deer with forked tails. The whole country, indeed, was noted for its deer, as Sir Robert Gordon records in 1639: "All these forests and schases are verie profitable for feeding of bestiall and delectable for hunting. They are full of red deer and roes."

Another branch of the Mackays displaced the Macleods at Edderachills, and called themselves Mackays of Scourie. Of these Mackays was Sir Hugh, born 1640, who fought against Dundee at Killiecrankie, but who earned more distinction

under William of Orange, in Ireland. The Gordons are still represented in Sutherland, although not very numerous, for the main stem of the Sutherland-Gordons ended in an heiress who married, in 1785, George Granville Leveson-Gower, Marquis of Stafford—whence the present Dukes of Sutherland, a title created in 1833.

In the beginning of the present century Sutherland was a land almost apart from the rest of the kingdom. There were no roads there till 1811, and the country resembled the most barren part of the west of Ireland. And yet every spot that could possibly be cultivated was inhabited by a strong and prolific race. The crops were poor indeed, just enough starveling oats to keep the people from starvation with bere, from which they distilled, preferably without the consent of the Revenue authorities, their favourite beverage, whisky. Smaller crofters lived mainly on potatoes, and every now and then a failure of the crops necessitated an importation of oatmeal by the landlords, to save the people from starving. The time had gone by when the lives of devoted men could be turned into money or honours; and thus a general clearance was resolved upon. Between 1810 and 1820 the great bulk of the small tenants were removed from their holdings and settled on the coast.

It is a mistake to suppose that emigration was largely resorted to. Some of the better class of small farmers, no doubt, found a more genial home on the other side of the Atlantic; but the great bulk of the people had not the means to emigrate, and certainly nobody came forward to supply them. They were compulsorily settled upon the sea-coast and upon the barren shores of the lochs. They were free to help themselves to the stones, and were incited to build their own huts therewith. Where the people were adaptative enough to take to fishing for a livelihood, the sea, more generous than the land, provided them with a fair living. Others, wearied with the struggle with such hard conditions, found a refuge almost as hard and unkind in the large cities. The wynds and narrow alleys of Glasgow could answer for a considerable proportion of the once free mountaineers of Sutherland.

With all this we have not touched upon what, to many, is the most interesting part of the story of these hyperborean regions. Some who care not for Gordons and Sinclairs, may exclaim, "Who was

of ferns and wild flowers, and the tender green of woods and copses, where all sorts of "small fowles" make melody. Altogether those are happy who can spend spring-time in Devonshire.

There are warm and pleasant nooks in Cornwall, where the east wind biteth not, and the hazy sea laps pleasantly among fairy caves; but these retreats are not very accessible in winter time. But there is a village called Fushing on Penrhyn Creek, just opposite Falmouth, where there is a ferry across the water, that has a most warm and genial aspect, and is so well sheltered from every cold wind that it affords an excellent retreat for any bronchially afflicted pilgrim. But then it is a retreat, not a popular resort; the place itself a village of no great pretensions.

The north coast of Cornwall and Devon, and the shores of the Bristol Channel, are better adapted for the summer and autumn, unless for those, who, like the late Charles Kingsley, enjoy (or pretend to enjoy, as is more likely) a boisterous north-easter. But from this verdict, Clevedon must be excepted, which enjoys an especially genial aspect, and with its margin of green meadows, stretching down to the very sea brink, and the pleasant scenery around, forms as pleasant a spring rendezvous as can be conceived.

All through Gloucestershire, under the shelter of the Cotswold Hills, runs a sheltered track of country, where spring opens genially and pleasantly, a district, the head-quarters of which is Cheltenham, by no means a desolate place, even when the hunting season is over, and violets stud the groves.

But for a warm, genial county, Herefordshire seems to bar the palm, although there is nothing but the charm of its rich pastoral scenery to bring people into the county; no spas, no baths, no watering places. And one might coast all round Wales without finding much temptation to linger in the bleak March winds. The snow-capped mountains give one a shiver, although the valleys are often pleasant and genial enough. Carmarthen Bay, with Tenby, seems warmly placed, and there are stretches of country along the coast here and there, which seem expressly designed for health resorts in the nipping seasons. Such is the shore between Barmouth and Harlech, sheltered eastwards by great barriers of hills, and enjoying a mild and equable climate, especially in the early months of the year.

Further north winter seems to linger, and there is a keen grip in the air that reminds us that we are in Northern latitudes. Still, along the west coast, and especially where the hills of the Lake district afford their shelter, there are warm and sheltered nooks; and although the days shorten and the fury of the gales increases, as we get further north, yet the season among the Western Isles, although wild and wet, is far from cold. But then, those Scotch lairds and Highland chiefs have had a keen eye to a comfortable nook, and most of the warm corners are already taken possession of.

THE OLD "R.A."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

SIXTY-FIVE years ago, in the great manufacturing town of Birmingham, which then was only in the dawn of its prosperity, a certain worthy button manufacturer—not a Cæsus by any means, but of wealth sufficient for modest wants—of the name of Fellowes, became the happy father of a son. The button-maker was stout, John Bullish, business-like, practical; his wife, Marianne, who was the daughter of a Baptist minister, of somewhat bookish habits, had a vein of gentle romance, and loved her Mrs. Hemans next to Cowper's Hymns, the "Pilgrim's Progress," and the Bible. The father suggested the unpretending names of John, Richard, Henry, which latter had a tendency in his mouth to lose one letter; the mother wished for something more poetic for the infant Hercules, who, she was sure, would grow up to be something remarkable. She suggested Gerald, Cyril, Cecil, Leonard. The father made a wry face at each, but he was heartily fond and proud of his sentimental, "superior" wife, and wished to please her. At last she discovered among her ancestors—for she boasted of ancestors, while he did not go beyond a grandfather who had kept a small cheesemonger's shop—a certain Sebastian. This was too alluring a name. She harped on the "Sebastian" till her husband gave in, and the boy baby was christened—for Richard Fellowes did not "hold with the Baptists"—by this high-sounding appellation; and Sebastian's mother, as mothers have a way of doing, built her airy castles of his future and dreamt of the honour she would shed on the family

he had come to adorn. For a wonder her dreams seemed likely to be fulfilled. He was—everyone said so, not only his parents and his nurse—a beautiful baby, strong, vigorous, rosy-cheeked, dimpled; he read at four; he got well through the preliminary tortures of pothooks and hangers; he even triumphed rapidly over the multiplication table. His mother adored him, and nourished his growing mind with such literature as she understood and loved. But the oddest thing was that the child began to develop an unexpected talent. Neither father, mother, uncle, aunt, nor grandparent had shown any marked leaning in the same direction—for feeble pencil landscapes with trees done in little rows of three, black silhouettes, or Berlin-work figures can hardly be called works of art. Sebastian was going to be an artist! At five he scratched figures with a knitting needle on the colour-washed walls of the night nursery, above his bed; he scrawled on his slate with more intention than is generally shown in such efforts; he covered his books with men and women in violent action; he made a portrait, at eight, of the black cat and his Grandfather Mildmay with his big, round spectacles, which were very like; he spoilt everything he touched that would admit being drawn upon.

That was his father's version; his mother's was very different. If he failed to get a high place at school, she excused him by saying that his head was full of other things; you could not expect a genius to be good at rule of three, and *hic hæc hoc*. It was not that he was idle or obstinate, as his master said; it was that he had not scope to show his talents. Her husband good-naturedly scolded her for her folly, while all the time his own heart was weak about this only son. He was now fifteen, and old enough to "come into the business," as the manufacturer announced in a matrimonial tête-à-tête to his wife.

A stranger, casually glancing at this couple—the husband black-browed, thick-set, with a somewhat bull-dog set of features, stout and solid figure, and loud, rather blustering manner of speech; the wife mild-eyed, pretty in an old-fashioned, intensely feminine fashion, as much like a brown-haired spaniel as he was to a bull-dog, with her drooping curls and soft insipid smile—would perhaps have thought him a domestic tyrant and her a willing slave. The facts were just opposite. The Birmingham button-maker was entirely led, if in a silken string, by his softly sen-

timental wife: she could do with him what she pleased. In his eyes she was high-born, elegant, accomplished, interesting; he was diffident about his own tastes, and dependent on her mind outside the sphere of his business, which he kept apart from her. He had let her manage the boy as he had let her name him according to her fancy, and he thought himself favoured by fortune for having won so "uncommon" a wife, as he called her. He had a mis-giving that his Marianne's opinion on the subject of Sebastian's career might not agree with his, and so, though he pronounced it with a great show of determination as if it were an unalterable decree, he mentally waited with some anxiety to hear what she had to say.

"You really think of our Sebastian taking to the business, Richard?" his wife cried, raising her mild voice above its usual level, and throwing up her long, thin, mittened hands with a gesture of astonishment. "You cannot be serious, dearest! You must know it will never be."

"Why on earth not? It's not a bad business, nor anything disgraceful. You used not to despise me for being a manufacturer, Marianne."

"You dear, oh no! I have nothing to say against the business for you; but Sebastian is different. He is a genius, he must follow his bent."

Mr. Fellowes shrugged his square shoulders in a helpless sort of way; he was silent for a moment, and he then said in a dubious tone, "I doubt genius buttering his bread, Marianne."

"My dear, everyone thinks him a wonder. I showed Mr. Gilbertson, the frame-maker, his book of drawings, and he said they were 'as-ton-ish-ing.' Gilbertson should be a judge if anyone is. He says we ought to send him to study in London: he knows an artist, a very gifted man, who takes pupils and trains them for the Royal Academy. It would be dreadful to tie down such a boy as Sebastian to button-making. I've nothing to say against it," she added coaxingly, as she perceived a slight frown on her lord and master's face, "only it is not what he is born for—one ought not to thwart a boy's genius."

It ended, as most matrimonial discussions ended with this worthy pair, in Mrs. Fellowes's triumph.

The manufacturer gave way. He went up to town and saw the artist who took pupils—and who paid Mr. Gilbertson, the frame-maker, a commission when he got

him any—and was impressed by the untidy, fierce-looking, ragged-haired man, who had “artist” written, as it were, on the shoulders of his dusty old studio-coat.

Mr. Fellowes was an acute and sensible man, though a slave to his die-away, soft-voiced wife, and he rightly judged old Hamlin, the unsuccessful painter, who could never make money, but who could make artists, and who had a spark of the divine fire in him, to be the right man to train the budding genius of Sebastian. His coarse, clever, charcoal drawing; his rough studies of colour, which seldom got finished; all had the mark of one who might have made a name if he had not been too erratic, too extravagant, and a little too fond of whisky to finish well what was finely conceived. He could teach, and had taken to that to earn his living, when he despaired of ever painting as it was in him to imagine what painting should be. He gladly closed with the liberal offer the Birmingham trader made him, and the long, handsome, brown-haired Sebastian, with the awkwardness of a hobbledohoy, and the gentleness of a girl in all his ways, came up to London to board with a Dissenting minister who knew Mr. Fellowes's father, and to draw at Mr. Hamlin's studio. It was a queer contrast between the studio in Fitzroy Square and the prim household in Charlotte Street. The one, dirty, disorderly, strongly flavoured with slang, tobacco, and spirits, with a Bohemian atmosphere of cleverness and devilry; the other, narrow, precise, conventionally pious, redolent of tea and tracts. The quiet boy had far more in common with the latter, though he meant to seize every opportunity that the studio offered to make that fame for which he longed, and to which he set his obstinate will. He disliked and disapproved of the talk, the smoke, the disorder; but he went calmly on in the midst of it, and fixed his mind firmly on the star of his hope beyond. He was an odd mixture: his stubbornness kept him serenely correct in what would have been a terrible ordeal for a weak or passionate temperament, and he was equally uninfected by the fervour and fire of his master's spirit; yet he was always mild, soft-spoken, docile.

“You will never be a great artist, lad!” Hamlin cried out one day, letting his hand fall heavily on his pupil's shoulder, as he stood behind him looking at the chalk drawing on his board; “you've a fatal facility, but you've no devil in you. Every

genius must have devil and angel mixed in him.”

Sebastian glanced up and smiled a little. He did not believe in the words in the least.

“Was there a devil in Raffaele, sir?” he asked softly.

“Raffaele! Do you mean to be a second Raffaele!” cried the old man, laughing in his rough way; “but I'm at times unconvinced of Raffaele's genius. I sometimes think it was only the consummation of talent. Yes, you've a fatal facility, you have great industry; it's very likely you will make money, but you sadly lack devil. Take to domestic art, my lad. Take to the touching—sentiment, sentiment, that's your line!”

“Yes, sir. I mean to do so. I should like to make the world sweeter and better by my brush.”

Old Hamlin grinned, and then made an odd face.

“Oh, you poor, good prig!” he muttered into his rough grey beard as he turned abruptly on his heel.

Sebastian went on with his chalk drawing of the Discobolus calmly, smiling a little. He did not in the least accept his master's dictum; he meant to be a great man, and he said to himself: “I will raise the love of art; mine shall be always pure.”

He went on with that “fatal facility” of which the rough artist spoke; his drawings were accepted at the Academy, and he became a student there. He made friends with the few steady pupils, avoided the rowdy ones, protested against the necessity of studying the life model—as may be supposed in vain. He could not see, he said, why knowledge of the human figure could not be mastered from the antique; he objected, on principle, to any other means of attaining such knowledge; he carefully concealed from his good parents in Birmingham and from the serious friends there, the awful fact that he was obliged to draw from the living undraped model. His mother would have had all her joy in the career of her genius completely destroyed if she had known the dreadful world of art, the temptation of the studio.

Of course, Sebastian was a laughing-stock. He was partly unconscious of that fact; wholly unmoved by it. The long-limbed, thin, rather angular lad had grown into a singularly handsome young man, with a certain stateliness of demeanour and sweetness of expression; a

liberate courtesy of manner which he wore perpetually; long brown locks curling at the end like his mother's; and features a little like those of the Stuart Charles the First.

He was, in spite of his rather melancholy expression, a lucky fellow, as all his companions declared. He never had any reverses; but then he was unexceptional—he never deserved any. He spent no time or money in riotous living; he drew or painted all day; occasionally went to the play; but more often his relaxations took the form of "spending a quiet evening" with friends. If the friends had daughters, he had cordial relations with them; but he kept out of flirtations or love-making.

Before he left the Academy he obtained a gold medal; he got a travelling scholarship, and visited Italy.

At twenty-three he had his own studio, and began to fill it with pictures. When he went home to Birmingham at Christmas he took his mother a present of one of these, beautifully framed and smoothly painted, a Biblical subject—Ruth Binding the Sheaves.

Mrs. Fellowes shed happy tears over it. Neither she nor any of her friends who were invited to see "dear Sebastian's sweet painting," discovered that Ruth's arm was out of drawing, and her hand too small by several inches. It was a lovely face; so smooth, and with such big, brown eyes, such richly-curling locks below the veil; the sky was so blue and the corn so yellow. Even the button-maker looked at it with much complacency, though he said he was no judge of such things. In his heart he marvelled at the strange development of the Fellowes stock, and supposed it was the Mildmay blood—Marianne's father, the Baptist minister, had published a book on the Prophets, and was considered a light in his connexion.

It is true that the next Academy skyed the only picture they took of Sebastian's; but he went on serenely, and had no fears. He took to painting domestic subjects—pretty babies beginning to walk, with smiling young mothers looking on—"The First Tooth," "Papa's Coming," and such like; and the year following he made his first hit with them. Three of his baby subjects were well hung; his religious one of "Christian at the Foot of the Cross," being rejected.

He felt that it was, as he said, his mission to sweeten and purify the world with his talent. Forty years ago art was at a low ebb;

critics were not so critical as they are now; the day of universal talent, of hopelessly overstocked markets of genius, had not begun. People, especially women, liked pretty, sentimental, drawing-room pictures, and Sebastian Fellowes suited them. He sold his three easily, and had an order for more. The robust spirits scoffed at his mild art; but he never minded scoffers, and they liked him in a way—even while they more than half despised him—he was so polite, so kind, so impossible to ruffle. And behind all the mildness there was a grand obstinacy, which was, perhaps, the most valuable quality he possessed. Self-belief and obstinacy, these take a man far!

He had no despairs or agonies; a happier man could hardly be. "And so good," his mother said with tears. "Most great geniuses are wild and difficult, but Sebastian is so good! He never forgets his father or me; he spends all the time he can with us; he never says a harsh word; he is as steady as if he had never left his mother's side!"

Certainly there was no sign of "devil" developing itself in Sebastian Fellowes. He painted on serenely, and had his public, his admirers, and his buyers. As for the class of critics who spoke of his pictures as "the roast mutton and milk pudding style of art," a profane description which stuck, he ignored them with generous disregard. He could afford to be abused; the Art journals of the day reproduced his "lovely bits of domestic art" in steel engravings of exquisite softness, and many a fair hand turned the page tenderly. Every year he conscientiously produced what he called a "serious" work, taking his subject from the Bible, from Milton, Spenser, or his mother's favourite, "Pilgrim's Progress." These did not sell so well as the babies, but he enjoyed painting them, and felt that he was fulfilling his destiny, and raising contemporary art. So the years slipped prosperously and calmly on till he was thirty, and then two great events came to Sebastian. One day, as he took an omnibus to the City to see a picture-dealer, he found opposite to him a face that was as an ideal to him. He was painting a picture in which there was to be an angel—a conventional angel, with large white wings and curling hair—and he had not hit as yet upon the countenance which he desired to depict. But this young girl simply, even shabbily, but neatly dressed in black, with

the innocent, wistful eyes of a child, and the milk tints of exquisite fairness, was his typical angel. He looked at her, not rudely, but with thoughtful and rather tender interest, but only met her blue eyes once, when she blushed and withdrew them. The blush made her perfect; completed his inward idea of sweetness, modesty, softness of character; and he told himself that he would see more of her. As usual, Sebastian's lucky star was in the ascendant; he saw her put her hand in her pocket for the little purse, which he could fancy was thin enough; a quick, pink colour—the blush of surprise and dismay, not of gentle confusion this time—flooded the pearly whiteness of her face. She withdrew her hand at last, and looked across at Sebastian—they were alone in the omnibus—with an expression of despair.

"Can I help you? Have you lost anything?" he asked her softly. Girls always instinctively trusted the handsome, stately man, with the kind, friendly brown eyes.

"I've been robbed," she said, with a little quiver in her voice, which was not at all a vulgar one, though the tone had a trace of the cockney. "I had not much, but it is very awkward—I have nothing to pay the man."

"Don't trouble at all about it. I shall be only too glad to help you out of that little difficulty," he said in his gentlest, most persuasive voice, instantly producing and passing a shilling to the conductor with the word "two."

"Thank you so much," she said, blushing again. "I will send you the sixpence if you'll tell me where."

"No; pray, pray, do not take the trouble! Do not think of it."

"I had rather," she said quietly, and a second thought striking him, he gave her his card at once. It occurred to him that he should like her to know where he lived.

When she asked him to stop the omnibus he got out with her, and pretending that he had business in her direction, asked very humbly if he might walk with her. She could not help trusting him; she could not

help liking him. They got into talk as if they had been "properly" introduced. She was only a respectable little working girl, who did fine work for a baby-linen warehouse, and supported an invalid, bed-ridden mother, with infinite difficulty and uncomplaining hard work; and he was a pure-hearted, chivalrous man, who would rather have suffered torture than betray a maiden's trust. They knew each other, somehow, to be simple and good. He walked through the sordid streets with little Mary North to her lodgings, and then asked her respectfully, and in a matter-of-fact way, if he might come in and see her mother. He went in, for she only hesitated a moment; was very kind and polite to the poor, half-alive creature, who had seen better days, as she kept repeating, and before they parted he had so convinced them of his good faith and absolute respectability, that the shy, modest girl had consented to let him paint her for his angel. When she was introduced to his large studio, chiefly adorned with his own pictures in different stages, she clasped her hands in delighted surprise, with an exclamation that made him smile with pleasure:

"Oh, sir, how lovely! I had no idea you were a great painter."

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CHARLES DICKENS

No. 958. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Dorby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. "EMBARRAS DE RICHESSES."

SIR ROY KENYON advanced eagerly to meet the two young people. He was a tall, finely-made man of some fifty years, with a face expressive of good-nature and indolence—the face of a man who had taken life easily all his days, and had a general dislike to "worry." Yet like many good-natured lazy people, he could be firm almost to obstinacy when he chose, and there was a look of determination about the lips that contradicted somewhat the genial smile and the kindly eyes.

"Welcome back, Neale, my boy!" he said, shaking hands heartily with the young fellow. "This is a surprise. Why did you not write?"

"I thought I'd be here as soon as a letter, uncle, and you know I detest pen and ink."

"A family failing," said the elder man. "Well, no matter, so long as you are here. And so Dr. Grünbaum was as good as his word, and your sight is all right again. Bravo! Let me look at you. Yes—I declare your eyes look as well as ever they did. What do you think, Alexis?"

"I have not looked at them yet," she said tranquilly. "Neale says he can see, and he ought to know best."

"She has been pitching into me as usual," said Neale, deprecatingly. "Making me feel a fool before we exchanged twenty words."

"Oh, that is only her way," laughed her father. "We all get served alike."

"You have only just come here, I suppose?"

"Yes—we arrived on Saturday. Where is your baggage, by the way?"

"Bari is bringing it. He ought to be here soon. I walked up from the lodge."

"And how did you like Bari? Was he all his character stated?"

"Oh, he is a capital fellow," said Neale, cheerfully. "Talks all the languages—saves one no end of bother, and is not above putting his hand to anything."

"A treasure indeed," remarked Alexis. She had plucked a tea-rose from one of the pots which had been brought from the forcing-houses, and was ruffling its delicate, perfumed petals in a listless fashion, as though the conversation did not interest her. "But, as a rule, confidential servants are a mistake. They impose on you, and get hold of your secrets—if you have any—and expect a premium for devotion all the time."

"Alexis is generally dissatisfied with everything and everyone," said her father with an indulgent smile. "That comes of being a spoiled child."

The girl tossed aside her rose carelessly, and, with one of her rare impulses of tenderness, put her hand on her father's arm.

"You are to blame," she said. "You should have denied me indulgence now and then. But it is only a case of the crumpled rose-leaf—nothing more serious."

"Have you ever found your rose-leaf?" asked her cousin.

"Occasionally; or I think I have, which answers the same purpose. But confess I am right in being hard to please. Life is so made up of shams and affectations that no one dares to be honest or truthful. We are all more or less bound by the way we live, and yet the world compels us to pretend we're not. Society is tiresome; it is

silly; it is profoundly selfish; and yet we are bound to it in a way, and can't break our self-wrought chains, or won't, because it needs courage. If we love freedom and air, and the greenwood, and the mountains, we sacrifice them for the sake of social distinction, or worldly success, or ignoble ambitions. We abuse the world, and yet we can't turn our backs on it and do without it."

"You might," said her cousin, "if you wished. But I don't believe you do wish. You like your court about you, say what you may; and you wouldn't care for a long run of solitude—unless," he added meaningly, "it was a 'solitude à deux;' and that wouldn't last a month with one so fickle."

"It will never last at all with me," she said scornfully. "How often am I to tell you that sentiment and I are utterly at variance?"

"You always did jest about what is serious and earnest to most women's lives," began Sir Roy.

"I am not jesting at all," she interrupted. "I speak exactly as I think. Why should I not? I have seen enough of men, and human nature in all its aspects, to be able to form some opinion of them."

"That," said her cousin, "is, as I said before, your misfortune. You dissect and analyse so unmercifully that enjoyment or appreciation become impossible. You were created with a capacity for both, but you have done your best to destroy them, not caring how much you lose thereby."

"That is the case, I fear," said Sir Roy, looking somewhat regretfully at the delicate, clear-cut face, with its lovely, scornful mouth. "If she could feel more human interest, and less contempt, she would be happier."

"I never said I was not happy," the girl interposed, "though it is only a word we interpret according to temperament. My idea of its meaning may be the opposite of yours, but that need not distress you. It is so exasperating to want everyone to think alike."

She drew her hand away from his arm, and moved on over the smooth green turf, towards the terrace.

The eyes of the two men followed her, one with unlimited adoration, the other with a certain bewilderment.

"I never met any one like her," said the younger man, turning to his uncle. "Does nothing really please her?"

"I dare say some things do," he an-

swered, "if, as she says, her way of being happy is a direct contradiction to ours."

"She would not accept the Prince after all?" questioned Neale.

"No. It was the usual answer—'he does not please me.' She does not want rank. Neale, my dear boy, I still hope my wish may be realised. She has never shown a shadow of preference for any man yet, save yourself, and I should feel happy—perfectly happy—in leaving her with you. You know her, and understand her. I am sure you would make her happier than anyone else I know. She is attached to the old place, and it will be yours when I am no more;" and he glanced over the magnificent grounds, and to where the June sunlight lay red and warm upon the beautiful old Abbey.

It was as well he did not see his nephew's face. It had grown white and red by turns. He felt quite unable to frame a syllable in reply.

"You—indeed, sir—you are mistaken," he stammered at last. "If anything, I'm sure Alexis dislikes me. We are always quarrelling."

"Pooh, pooh—so much the better," interposed Sir Roy. "Doesn't some wise man say love ought to begin with 'a little aversion.' Believe me it is much better to marry someone whose tastes and disposition you know, than some stranger with a pretty face or a fascinating manner, whom you meet in society and of whom you know absolutely nothing until you are tied together. Comfort in matrimony is a great deal better than romance."

Neale could hardly restrain a smile. "Comfort and Alexis!" he thought, but he kept silent. He was indeed sorely discomposed by his uncle's remarks. Often as he had hinted at the possibility of a marriage between his cousin and himself, he had never spoken so plainly as this.

"You ought to marry, and soon," persisted Sir Roy. "You have had time enough to sow your wild oats. I am getting on in years, and I should like to see you settled down, and your children running about the old quiet rooms, before I go the way of all flesh."

The young man's face grew cold and stern.

"I have no inclination for marriage yet," he said. "And Alexis dislikes me, if anything. I would not force myself on any woman, were she as lovely as Venus."

"Force!—force!—no one is talking of force!" exclaimed Sir Roy, petulantly.

"And, I tell you, Alexis does not dislike you; far from it. Who should know her if I do not? Come—promise me you will do your best to win her. You can sell out, you know, and live here. I shall not trouble you much. Give me a corner, and my library, and my horse, and I shall be as happy as a King. Why, you look as if I were offering you poison! There are not many men who would have to be asked twice to accept Alexis Kenyon."

"It is not that—I feel the honour most deeply," stammered Neale. "But—I—I was not prepared."

"There is no one else in the background, is there?" asked his uncle, looking keenly at the young man's embarrassed face. "Come, be frank. Surely you have done with follies of that sort."

"Yes, of course," answered Neale, hurriedly. "Indeed—indeed it is only as I said, a natural disinclination for matrimony."

"Oh, well," said the Baronet, laughing good-humouredly. "That will soon wear off, if you accustom yourself to think of it. We all feel like that when we're young. But marriage is not such a terrible bugbear after all. In a month you'll tell me a different story. Why, here comes Bari with your luggage. You'd like to go to your room, I suppose. We dine at seven as usual. You'll find me in the smoking-room, if you want me."

He waved his hand and went off towards the conservatories, where a white dress was fluttering among leaves and blossoms. He had better settle the matter now that he was in the mood, he thought, and Alexis was generally amenable to his wishes, when she saw his heart was set upon any special thing.

He overtook her among the aisles of palms and cacti, which were like a reminiscence of the Riviera. She turned as she heard his step, and greeted him with her slight, cool smile. "What have you done with Neale?" she asked. "I thought you would have enough to talk about till dinner-time."

"He has gone within," said her father. "He looks very well. Do you not think so? He is pleased to be home again."

"Indeed," she said indifferently. "He did not give me that impression."

"You always snub him and freeze him into silence. You treat him very unkindly, Alexis, and he feels it."

She glanced up quickly.

"Has he been complaining?" she asked, her lip curling scornfully.

"Oh, no; but I could read between the lines. Come, my child, listen to me for a few moments. You have been indulged all your life. I have denied you nothing that it was in my power to give you. Sometimes I think it has spoilt you a little; sometimes, that I would not have you different for all the world. You laugh at the love you win, and yet you have only to appear, to win more. I think you would be happier if you allowed your feelings as much play as you do your intellect; if you did not deny your womanhood all that it has a right to exact—if——"

"My dear father," she interposed lightly, "have you come to deliver a sermon to me? Deny my womanhood! When did I ever do such a thing? You make me fancy I have been wearing a Bloomer costume, or driving tandem, or playing a billiard match, or something equally unfeminine; and I assure you I have done nothing of the sort. I like pretty dresses, and waltzing, and tennis, as much as any woman."

"You know," said her father impatiently, "that is not what I mean. It is the way in which you treat men."

"I treat them as well as they deserve," she said indifferently.

"Will you never care for anyone?" he asked.

She lifted her eyebrows with a pretty pretence of surprise.

"I care for—you," she said, with a sudden softening of the voice.

"Yes, dear," he said, "I know. But that is not all. Some day you must marry—you ought to marry—it is a woman's lot, you know. It makes me very anxious, when I think of your future. I may not live long. My father, you know, died at forty-five, and we have never been a long-lived race. I wish with all my heart, child, that I could see you safely and happily settled before my time comes."

"Don't look so solemn," she said. "There is plenty of time before any contingency so alarming should arise."

"Have you never loved anyone?" he persisted.

"Dear father," she said impatiently. "You know I have not. I am not romantic. I never was. I have no old letters, or faded roses, or keepsakes of any kind in my desk, and yet I am twenty-three, and have been in the world since I was fifteen. No; lovers have no charms for me—and marriage less."

"Still," he insisted, "you ought to marry."

She made a wry face. "I fail to see the obligation. If I were a Crown Princess—"

"You are my Princess," he said tenderly; "and I should like to see your children at my knee, and to know that you were happy and sheltered in a husband's love, before life and I had bade farewell to one another."

Her face flushed faintly; she turned a little aside.

"I fail to see how that could add to your happiness. I am sure," and she laughed again, "it could not possibly help mine."

"Yes, it would; you do not know," he urged. "All your charms, your conquests, your successes, do not satisfy your heart."

"I should get tired of any man," she said. "I could not help it. They irritate me—they weary me. They could give me nothing for the sacrifice of myself. Marriage always seems to me a mistake. Binding yourself for life to one person, promising impossibilities! How can one answer for one's feelings? You can't swear to be the same in ten or twenty years' time as you are to-day; one's features alter, so does one's nature. You make marriage as commonplace as a lease—but not so comfortable. You can change or let your house again if you get tired of it—you can't your husband."

"Oh, Alexis," cried her father in despair, "you are too provoking. It is not right, it is not natural. Men are not so bad as you make out. They can be constant—steadfast—true."

"Not for long," she persisted; "and not to their own wives—to someone else's, I grant. They are like children: what is denied becomes immediately invested with a hundred charms; what is possessed becomes valueless."

"You make such sweeping assertions," he said impatiently, "you class all together. It is not fair. One man, at all events, has loved you very constantly—ever since he and you were boy and girl, despite your coldness and indifference."

"Or rather, you should say, because of it. Whose cause have you come to plead now?"

"Your cousin's!" he said abruptly.

She started. Again that faint rose-flush warmed her cheek.

"Nonsense!" she said sharply. "Neale—why, he cares no more for me than——"

"He does. Indeed he does," said her father eagerly; "only he has not courage to say so, you treat him so cruelly. And, Alexis, it is the dearest wish of my heart.

The place will be his, you know that, and he understands you better than anyone else. He is not very brilliant or very talented, but he is honest, and true, and deeply affectionate. He will make you an admirable and indulgent husband. Will you consider the matter?"

"Oh," she said, and laughed a little, "that is easily promised. But really I think you are mistaken. If Neale cares for me—at all—he has never given me a hint of it."

"Because you always ridicule love and declarations. They never touch, they only amuse you. You treat men just as you like, and do with them as you please, and they bow to your will and submit. He knows that; and in his way he is proud. He would not care to be thrown aside like—like the others."

"I prefer a man to do his own wooing," she said.

"He will do it well enough when the time comes," said her father. "But, perhaps, he is afraid as yet of being added to the list of those you have made ridiculous. It is difficult to understand you, Alexis."

"My likings have generally grown into contempt," she said. "But that was not my fault."

"You might be very happy with Neale," urged her father.

"And the long lease?" she said, smiling. "I am afraid it would be a risk. True, as you say, we know the worst of one another. That is something."

"Then will you think of it, for my sake, dear child?"

"Well," she said reflectively, "it is not a very lover-like speech to make; but I would certainly think of it for your sake more readily than for his."

"And he may speak for himself some day?"

"Oh," she said, laughing, "he will not woo me half so eloquently as you have done. I think he had better make you his ambassador—if it is necessary to say any more. There is no hurry for a year or two."

THE FOLK-LORE OF MARRIAGE.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART I.

HAVING dealt with Love and Courtship in previous articles,* I now come to matters superstitious in relation to Marriage, together with a few customs which are devoid

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xxxix., pp. 269, 274, 515.

of superstition, but may be found interesting.

To begin at the beginning. Banns of marriage have their origin, like many of our Ecclesiastical regulations, in the ancient practice of the Roman Catholic Church. The earliest enactment on the subject in the English Church is the eleventh Canon of the Synod of Westminster, 1200, which rules that no marriage shall be contracted until the banns have been thrice published in the parish church. This was confirmed by the sixty-second Canon of the Synod of London, 1603-4. By an Act of 26 George the Second, cap. xxxiii., the publication was required to be on three consecutive Sundays only. This Act was superseded by Act 4, George the Fourth, cap. lxxvi., which provides that the marriage must take place within three months after the publication of the banns. Tertullus, who died 240 A.D., states that the Primitive Church was forewarned of marriages, and in 1215 it was regularly established by the Fourth Lateran Council.

Rev. C. J. Egerton relates the following story, apropos of the publication of banns: "I have heard from a brother clergyman an incident, the truth of which internal evidence may be said to guarantee, inasmuch as it seems beyond the power of invention. The good old minister of whom it was told always used to have the book containing the banns put on the reading desk just at his right hand. One Sunday morning he began as usual, 'I publish the banns of marriage between —,' and, putting down his hand in all confidence for the book, found to his dismay that it was not there! In his nervousness, while searching for the missing register, he kept on repeating the formula, 'I publish the banns of marriage between —I publish the banns of marriage between,' till at last the clerk from beneath, in sheer pity, came to the rescue with a suggestion whispered loudly enough to be heard all over the church, 'Between the cushion and the desk, sir.' The book had simply slipped under the cushion. The result of the accident was a publication of banns which I should imagine to be unique."

Space forbids me entering into the various forms of marriage practised over the "Border," such as "jumping the broom." One, however, I think will be found new and interesting, and that is the Scotch custom of Marrying by Meal. This will best be illustrated by an actual fact.

In the year 1867, two persons left Dalkeith for Galashiels, and not having the requisite funds to get married by a minister, they each took a handful of meal and knelt down facing each other, after placing a basin between them. Both then placed their hands full of meal in the basin, and mixed it, in token that they "would not sever till death did them part." After swearing to this effect on a Bible, they both rose up and declared themselves man and wife. They afterwards returned to Dalkeith, where they afterwards resided as man and wife, the marriage being considered perfectly legal.

Morganatic or left-handed marriages were at one time very common, but are now extremely rare. In some Continental countries they may take place between a man of elevated rank and a woman of lower degree. One result of them, however, is that they neither raise the wife to the level of her husband, nor the children to the rank of their father. In such marriages, the left hand instead of the right is given by the man, hence the term, "left-handed marriage."

The custom of the bride wearing a veil on the occasion of her wedding is, without doubt, of Eastern origin. Amongst Anglo-Saxons it was held over the heads of the bride and bridegroom to hide the blushes of the happy lady from the company. This little compliment was not paid to a widow on her re-marriage, as her blushes were supposed to have been exhausted. This custom was gradually superseded by the Eastern and more graceful practice of wearing long, sweeping, gauzy veils.

How the orange-blossom first came to be used at marriages is veiled in obscurity. In France, this custom is a matter of much pride and importance, inasmuch as it is a testimonial of purity, not only of the bride herself, but of integrity and morality in the character of her relatives.

In the province of Franche Comté, to wear the orange-blossom is considered a sacred right, obtained by undoubted character, and, as such, proudly maintained. Should any act of imprudence in early life, implying even a suspicion of taint upon the honour of the maiden, be known, the use of the orange-blossom is sternly forbidden.

In almost every village or small town in France, the bride entitled to wear the crown of orange-blossom has this beautiful certificate of her purity either framed or placed under a glass shade; and it is religiously preserved, if possible, even through

generations, as an indisputable testimonial of undoubted character.

In Germany, the duties of the bridesmaid have just a tinge of superstition about them. It is one of their duties on the morning of the marriage day to carry to the bride a myrtle wreath, for which they had subscribed on the previous evening. This they place on her head, and at night remove it, when it is placed in the bride's hand, she being at the time blindfolded. The bridesmaids then dance around her, while she endeavours to place the wreath on one of their heads. Whoever is fortunate enough to be thus decorated will, it is believed, be herself a wife before another year has passed away.

In removing the bridal wreath and veil, the bridesmaids are careful to throw away every pin, or the bride will be overtaken by misfortune; while any unwary bridesmaid who retains one of these useful little articles, will materially lessen her chances of "getting off."

Like many other German superstitions, this has found its way into England, though it has not yet become a general belief.

Throwing an old slipper after a bride and bridegroom, when starting on their honeymoon, is supposed to have taken its origin from a Jewish custom, and signifies the obedience of the wife as well as the supremacy of the husband. A shoe is thrown for luck on other occasions besides a marriage. Ben Jonson says:

Hurl after me an old shoe,
I'll be merry, whatever I do.

It is related that, many years ago, when lotteries were permitted, the custom of throwing a shoe, taken from the left foot, after persons was practised for good luck. This custom has existed in Norfolk and other counties from time immemorial, not only at weddings, but on all occasions where good luck is required.

A cattle dealer required his wife to "trull her left shoe after him" when he started for Norwich to purchase a lottery ticket. As he drove off on his errand, he looked round to see if his wife had performed the charm, and received the shoe in his face with such force as to black his eyes. He went and bought his ticket, which turned up a prize of six hundred pounds, and he always attributed his luck to the extra dose of shoe which he got. The custom as it originally existed is dying out, for, whereas our forefathers threw old shoes after the wedding equipage, we, in this more luxurious age,

purchase new white satin slippers for the purpose.

The origin of this custom may be traced from the words in Psalm cviii., "Over Edom will I cast out my shoe," meaning thereby that success should attend the methods used to subdue the Edomites. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the superstitious custom has arisen from this construction of these words.

This brings me to a very interesting part of the ancient marriage ceremony, which makes one long to have been a parson in the days gone by. I refer to the kiss once given by the clergyman after tying the nuptial knot. This kiss in the church is enjoined by both the York Missal and the Sarum Manual. It is expressly mentioned in the following line from the old play of *The Insatiate Countess*, by Marston: "The kisse thou gav'st me in the church here take." That this custom was not always pleasing to Mrs. Minister is illustrated in the following anecdote:

"'I notice,' said a clergyman's wife to her husband, 'that it is no longer fashionable for the minister to kiss the bride at the wedding ceremony.'

"'Yes,' sadly responded the good man, 'many of the pleasant features connected with the wedding ceremony have been discarded, and—'

"'What's that?' demanded his wife ominously.

"'I mean—I mean,' he stammered, 'that the senseless custom of kissing the bride should have been abolished long ago.'

"'Oh!' replied the mollified wife, resuming her paper."

It may not be generally known that the word "honeymoon" is derived from the ancient Teutons, and means the drinking for thirty days after marriage of methuggin, mead, or hydromel, a kind of wine made from honey. Atila, a celebrated King of the Huns, who boasted of the appellation, "The Scourge of God," is said to have died on his nuptial night from an uncommon effusion of blood, brought on by indulging too freely in hydromel at his weddingfeast. The term "honeymoon" now signifies the first month after marriage, or so much of it as is spent from home. John Tobin, in *The Honeymoon*, thus refers to it:

This truth is manifest—a gentle wife
Is still the sterling comfort of man's life;
To fools a torment, but a lasting boon
To those who wisely keep their honeymoon.

Johnson describes it as "the first month after marriage, when there is nothing but tenderness and pleasure;" and Addison says, "A man should keep his finery for the latter season of marriage, and not begin to dress till the honeymoon is over."

In Alsace and some places round about there still exists a traditional usage, evidently a relic of ruder times, that at the close of the marriage feast the bride shall give one of her garters to the bridegroom's best man, who forthwith divides it into small pieces, which are distributed amongst the guests. In some manner the incident is associated with good luck, but how I have been unable to ascertain, though it is pretty certain that the bride always provides herself with a new and splendid pair of garters for the occasion.

I now come to a more matter-of-fact part of my subject, the giving of presents at weddings. Pin money, as a lady's dowry, had its origin with the introduction of pins, which were so expensive and withal so necessary to a lady's comfort, that a separate allowance was made to her for their purchase. The amount of the pin money formed at one time an item in the wedding contracts of the rich. Pins were first introduced prior to the year 1347, when twelve thousand were delivered from the Royal wardrobe for the use of Princess Joan, and in the year 1400, the Duchess of Orleans purchased of Jehan de Breconnier, Espinglier, of Paris, several thousand long and short pins, beside five hundred "*de la façon d'Angleterre.*" In the fourteenth century, makers were only allowed to sell their commodity openly on the two great feast days of the year, and ladies and city dames flocked to the depots to buy them, having first been provided with "pin money" by their husbands.

Anciently a considerable sum of money was put into a purse or plate, and presented by the bridegroom to the bride on the wedding night; a custom common to the Greeks as well as the Romans, and which appears to have prevailed among the Jews and many Eastern nations. It was changed in the Middle Ages, and in the North of Europe, for the Morgengabe, or morning present, the bride having the privilege, the morning after marriage, of asking for any sum of money or any estate in her husband's possession that she pleased, and which could not, in honour, be refused by him. Something of the same kind prevailed in England under the name of

the "Dow," or endowment purse. A trace of this is still kept up in rural Cumberland, where the bridegroom provides himself with gold and silver, and when the service reaches the point, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," he takes up the money, hands the clergyman his fee, and pours the rest into a handkerchief, which is held by the bridesmaid for the bride. When Clovis was married to the Princess Clotilde, he offered by his proxy a sou and a dernier, which became the marriage offering, by law, in France; and to this day pieces of money are given to the bride, varying only in value according to the rank of the parties.

From some old plays it appears that knives were formerly part of the accoutrement of an English as well as of a German bride. The practice of wearing such articles and purses was pretty general among European ladies at the end of the sixteenth century. Wedding knives were presented, among other articles of a domestic character. Amongst the Norwegians, in Pagan times, the bride's wedding outfit included a sword, an axe, and a shield, with which to defend herself against any attack of her liege lord.

When Rolf, King of Norway, and Eric's daughter were married, they sat throned in state, whilst the King's courtiers passed before them and deposited offerings of oxen, sheep, sucking-pigs, horses, geese, and other live stock. Formerly, amongst poor people, there existed a custom of having Penny Weddings, at which the guests gave a contribution towards the feast and to endow the bride. These, however, were reprobated by the straiter-laced sort as leading to disorder and licentiousness, but it was found impossible altogether to suppress them. All that could be done was to place restrictions upon the amount allowed to be given; in Scotland, the limit was fixed at five shillings. The custom is not quite obsolete at the present day, though it is only practised in places far removed from the "busy hum." It is from customs such as I have attempted to describe that our present elaborate system of giving presents at weddings has sprung, customs that can be traced back to the dark ages.

With our forefathers, a great deal depended on the day and the month whether a marriage would be happy or not. For instance, they believed in the silly saw—

Marry in May,
Rue for aye,

a superstition to which some ancient

writers, including Ovid, gave credence. It was also believed in by Sir Walter Scott, in more modern times, for we find that he hurried home from the Continent to prevent the marriage of his daughter to Mr. Lockhart taking place in the "unlucky month." Why May should be considered an unfavourable time for entering into the happiest and most sacred of human relationships is not at all clear; but though we laugh at the notion, it still has its weight, as evidenced from the fact that it is the month in which fewest marriages are contracted.

A beautiful wedding custom prevails now, and has for centuries existed, in some parts of the Tyrol. When a maiden is about to be married, before she leaves the parental roof to go to the church, her mother hands to her a handkerchief termed the "tear kerchief." It is made of newly-spun linen, and has never been used. With this the bride dries away her tears when she leaves her father's home, and while she stands at the altar. After the marriage is over, and the bride has, with her husband, entered her new home, she carefully folds up the handkerchief, and places it, unwashed, in her linen-closet, where it remains untouched until, old and wrinkled, the bride of long ago falls asleep in that rest which knows no earthly awakening. Then the "tear kerchief" is taken from its place, and spread over the placid face of the dead. The custom is both simple and beautiful, savouring of the homely life of the people with whom it finds favour.

The Japanese are extremely superstitious, and have innumerable signs and tokens by which to regulate their conduct and beliefs. At a marriage ceremony neither bride nor bridegroom wears any clothing of a purple colour, lest their marriage tie be soon loosed, as purple is the colour most liable to fade. Every nation has its superstitions on this subject, and strangely enough, while other beliefs have died out, and are forgotten, these remain to us, some with almost their original force.

Half a century ago a Welsh writer, describing a marriage in the Principality, said: "Ill may it befall a traveller who has the misfortune of meeting a Welsh wedding on the road. He would be inclined to suppose that he had fallen in with a company of lunatics escaped from their confinement. It is the custom of the whole party who are invited, both men and women, to ride full-speed to the church porch, and the person who arrives there

first has some privilege or distinction at the marriage feast. To this important object all minor considerations give way. The stranger will be fortunate if he escape being overthrown by an onset, the occasion of which puts out of sight that urbanity so generally characteristic of the people."

Another custom that has very often been described, was known as the "Bidding." The "bidder" in former times was a person of a respectable and popular character, possessed of much eloquence, considerable talent, and an inexhaustible fund of native mirth and rustic humour. At the castles of the principal chieftains his constant ambition was to arrive just at dinner time, when the lord and his retainers were found assembled in the great hall, in high spirits. Then rattling his bâton against the floor to procure attention, and dropping a graceful bow, he began his harangue.

There was generally a prescribed form adapted to these purposes; but the orator indulged in occasional deviations from the beaten track, displaying his talents in mirthful sallies and humorous parodies on celebrated passages from favourite authors. If the parties were of the lower order in society, he gave their pedigree with affected gravity; drew up a mock history of their exploits, and of their brave and generous actions; expatiated on their personal excellences, and on the good qualities of their ancestors; descanted on the joys of matrimony, and the miseries of celibacy; and when he imagined that he had succeeded in putting his audience into good humour, he returned with great address to his subject, applied himself successively to the principal persons present, and endeavoured to extract a promise from them, which, when obtained, was regularly entered on his tablets. His reputation as an orator, and his reward as a bidder, depended on the success of his eloquence and on the number of promises which he obtained. When his oration was closed, the "hirlas," or silver-tipped horn, was put into his hands, foaming with ale or sparkling with mead. He thanked his audience for their friendly attention, drank their healths, and with a bow modestly retired.

On the morning of the nuptial day, the bride and bridegroom, privately attended by their particular friends, repaired to church at an early hour, when the ceremony was performed, and their title to the enjoyment of domestic happiness inserted in the usual records.

On their return the bride and bride-

groom separated, and repaired to the mansions of their respective friends. In the great hall they made their appearance to receive the congratulations of their visitors. Considerable address was requisite, in order to recollect the names and make proper enquiries after the families of each particular visitor, and when the youth or the inexperience of the bride or bridegroom rendered them unequal to the task, they were assisted by friends of maturer years, who refreshed their memories and guided their erring judgements.

The names of the visitors were entered by a proper person in a book provided for the occasion, that, under similar circumstances, the visit might be returned, and the amount of whatever compliment they left might be faithfully restored whenever it should appear to be required. The tokens of friendship, or of neighbourly benevolence, which they determined to bestow were deposited on a large silver dish provided for the purpose. In a lesser degree this ancient custom is kept up to the present day in the less frequented parts of the Principality.

The "Bidder" ceased his avocation long ago, but as late as the present decade announcements have appeared in the Welsh newspapers, intimating that certain persons intended taking upon themselves the conjugal yoke, and would thankfully receive any offerings that might be forwarded for their acceptance. The following is a copy of a modern "bidding" notice:

"As we intend to enter the matrimonial state on Thursday, the seventeenth day of July next, we are encouraged by our friends to make a bidding on the occasion, the same day, at the Butchers' Arms, Carmarthen, when and where the favour of your good and agreeable company is humbly solicited; and whatever donation you may be pleased to confer on us then will be thankfully received, warmly acknowledged, and cheerfully repaid whenever called for, on a similar occasion, by your most obedient servants, John Jones, Mary Evans."

Of all the curious marriage customs that have been handed down to posterity as having been indulged in, perhaps one of the most curious is that which at one time (not very far distant) prevailed in Scotland to an almost universal degree, and from the manner in which it was carried out was called "Creeling the bridegroom." How, or when, or where it first originated is lost completely in the mists of obscurity;

but I think it is perfectly safe to assert that when first practised, superstition had something to do with it.

The mode of procedure in the village of Galashiels was as follows: Early in the day after the marriage, those interested in the proceeding assembled at the house of the newly wedded couple, bringing with them a "creel" or basket, which they filled with stones. The young husband, on being brought to the door, had the creel firmly fixed to his back, and with it in this position had to run the round of the town, or at least the chief portion of it, followed by a number of men to see that he did not drop his burden; the only condition on which he was allowed to do so being, that his wife should come after him and kiss him. As relief depended altogether upon the wife, it would sometimes happen that the husband did not need to run more than a few yards; but when she was more than ordinarily bashful, or wished to have a little sport at the expense of her lord and master—which it may be supposed would not unfrequently be the case—he had to carry his load a considerable distance. This custom was very strictly enforced, and the person who was last creeled had charge of the ceremony, and he was naturally anxious that no one should escape. The practice, as far as Galashiels was concerned, came to an end about one hundred years ago, with the person of one Robert Young, who, on the ostensible plea of a "sore back," lay abed all the day after his marriage, and obstinately refused to get up and be creeled. He had, it may be added in extenuation, been twice married before, and had on each occasion gone through the ceremony of being creeled, and now, no doubt, felt that he had had quite enough of creeling.

A KANAKA ROYAL FAMILY.

EVER since they were named by Captain Cook, rather more than a century ago, the Sandwich Islands have been rapidly losing their population. This sad fact is a proof that Nature does not pay us out all at once; she mostly gives long credit, and then, when the debt is forgotten, exacts not only the old principal, but a terrible amount of interest to boot. The present Sandwich Islanders would, I believe, compare favourably in morals with average

Europeans; yet the dwindling away has till now gone on at a pace which threatens total extinction in very few generations. Why? Because since, in 1789, nine years after Cook's visit, the American sloop Pandora anchored off Maui, English and American whalers made the islands a house of call, with results which, till the missionaries gained a real and wholesome influence, were disastrous to the native population. It has been a case of natural selection.

Jack and Jonathan, off a long voyage in the South Seas, behaved as they would in Ratcliff Highway, or Wapping, or the Bowery. The only difference was that they brought their drink with them, and raw rum is a very different drink from kawa. Those among us whose constitutions were least able to resist alcoholic poisoning have, throughout our islands and especially in their most alcoholised districts, been gradually killed off. The remainder are more or less proof against it; some sadly less, as doctors and magistrates can testify; but still the least fortified of them has immeasurably more stamina—power of standing against the diseases brought on by drink—than a Kanaka (South-Sea Islander), none of whose ancestors had ever tasted spirits.

The same of other diseases. We are not quite proof against measles or smallpox; but, despite occasional sporadic outbursts, these and other diseases don't cut us down as the Black Death did more than five hundred years ago. A measles epidemic, spread from a single case imported from Sydney by one of King Cacobau's suite, swept off a third of the population of the Fiji Isles; smallpox has before now annihilated a Red Indian tribe; drink (that vilest of all vile compounds known as "Cape Smoke") is killing off the Basutos, the noblest of the South African tribes. No wonder the Sandwich Islanders should have been more than decimated by the diseases and the drink brought amongst them by the disreputable sailors who, a century ago, formed the staple of English and American South-Sea whaling crews.

Among the Sandwich Islanders some of the imported diseases often took the form of leprosy of a very ghastly kind. The first step (taken not so long ago) towards saving the race was to do what the Jews did—separate the lepers. There is now a leper-land, wholly given up to these poor creatures, on the landing-place of which way well be written: "All hope abandon

ye who enter here." The only non-leperous being on Leper-Island is a noble Roman Catholic priest, a Frenchman, who, when quite young, volunteered for this imprisonment for life (for he never can be let out lest he should bring the taint with him), in order to minister to these poor creatures.

What with alcohol, then, and diseases of which their bodies had had no previous experience, there is no need to rave like Kingsley about "rotting races." Any race would rot under such conditions. We rotted, tough as we now are, under the epidemics of the Middle Ages—the Black Death, and the Sweating Sickness, and the Plague. Those of our forefathers and foremothers who were likely to take such diseases badly, took them and died of them.

Read the records of the Black Death, and you will see that it was for many an English parish a case of depopulation as severe as what has taken place in Oahu and its fellow islands. There is just one difference—after such a visitation a European country soon makes up its number; population sometimes seems to go ahead "by leaps and bounds." Such a country has a recuperative force which is wanting wherever a race falls through contact with whites.

Of course, the waste of war has had its share in reducing the Sandwich Islanders from four hundred thousand (how could Cook count them?) to less than forty thousand.

In New Zealand, where Heki played Napoleon, and, coming to England, got King George to give him plenty of muskets and ammunition, this waste has been much more destructive than disease. The old battles, even when they wound up with a cannibal feast, were nothing compared to the wholesale shooting down by Heki's tribe of other tribes who had no firearms, and who still, with traditionary intrepidity, stood their ground against the new weapons.

The waste of war did not last long in the Sandwich Islands, but, while it did last, it sensibly lessened the population. There had always been plenty of fighting; Juan Gaetano, the Spaniard, who discovered the islands in 1555, describes the natives as continually at war, and as being cannibals to boot. In Cook's time, Kamehameha, "the lonely one," son of the chief of Kona, a district of Hawaii, was already planning to unite all the islands under his own sovereignty. He was very young when his father died;

and his kinsman Kiwalao, chief of the neighbouring district of Kau, coveted the rich fisheries of Kona, and came to the funeral at the head of all his warriors.

"Don't bring so many mourners," was the message which met him before he reached the frontier.

"I will," he replied; and so Kamehameha gathered his clan, and there was a battle on the shore, which lasted eight days, till the death of Kiwalao led to the dispersal of his followers.

Master of Kau, the young Kamehameha soon conquered, partly by arms, partly by lavish gifts, the rest of Hawaii, and then led his troops across the sea to Maui, the chief of which had helped Kiwalao. There was hard fighting; a river was so choked with corpses, that its course was changed, and the battle was called the fight of Deadmen's Dyke. But the conquered were by no means thoroughly beaten. For some time, whenever Kamehameha was in Maui there would be a rising in Hawaii, and vice versa. Moreover, it was easy to get to Maui, across some forty miles of sea; but how was this Kanaka Napoleon to conquer the remoter islands, some of which, like Kawai, were sundered from Hawaii by nearly three hundred miles?

John Metcalf, captain of the Pandora afore-said, seemed to him the very man (for, unlike Cook, Metcalf didn't pose as a god) to help him in his design. The Pandora had come for a cargo of sandal-wood, in exchange for which Metcalf gave nails, hatchets, and knives, but no guns. He made such a profit by selling the wood in China that he was soon back again, but this time Kamehameha insisted on a ship's boat—so much more seaworthy he thought, than his war canoes. Metcalf refused; so the night before he was to sail, a strong party of Kanakas came on board and tried to seize the cutter. They were beaten off, and the sloop opened on them a murderous fire, and hastily weighed anchor, leaving ashore a quartermaster, Isaac Davis, and an English sailor, John Young. These two Kamehameha rescued from the fury of his subjects, and made them teach him the use of the white man's tools and how to build boats. By-and-by he raised them to the rank of chiefs, giving them as wives ladies of noble birth. The descendants of these sailors still hold high rank in the islands. Queen Emma, who lately died, aged forty-nine, was daughter of the Chief George Naea, and Fanny, John Young's daughter. How

strange that, sixty years after this common sailor's death, his granddaughter should have been received at Windsor with the honours due to Royalty, and should have had the Queen and the Prince of Wales as sponsors for her only child!

Kamehameha was not long-lived; he died in 1819. But he had succeeded in making himself master of the whole group of islands, and he had opened them to trade and to European ideas. From England and America he had obtained artisans, sailors, arms, and missionaries.

In 1793 he had given Vancouver a right royal welcome, and the navigator, in exchange for the presents which the King heaped upon him, had left him a plough and harrow, and taught him how to use them, leaving him also seed-corn and the seeds of various plants, besides tools, and iron to make his own nails. When he next came, Vancouver brought him a bull and five cows, and a flock of sheep—ancestors of the vast flocks and herds now pasturing on the islands. America soon saw how valuable the whole group is for whalers to put in at and revictual. Here, too, the New York merchants scented a good market for their unsaleable goods, and New England missionaries worked, with great apparent success, at the difficult task of teaching Christianity to the Kanakas. They were specially great in schools. Emma, the future Queen, who, on the death of her parents, had been adopted by the rich English doctor, Thomas Rooke, went along with the young people of the Royal family, to the Honolulu Mission School for the children of chiefs, and got the sort of education which, in those days, was given to the Upper Ten in Boston or New York.

The missionaries did much good; they completely changed the face of Sandwich Island society, and made it decent and orderly; insisted on everybody being clad in long cotton robes; made them all turn teetotallers; taught them the three Rs; and, in fact, did everything except inspire the race with vitality. They could not make the islanders a long-lived breed; of the Royal family especially, not one has, since we knew the group, reached the Psalmist's limit of age.

Kamehameha the Second's reign was very short, and was wholly taken up with disputes between the missionaries and the traders and whalers, both equally indignant at the restrictions which the missionaries placed on business and on pleasure. The

whalers thought it very hard lines that, on landing at their traditional pleasure-haunts, they found the women shut up like nuns; and the drink-shops only open under severe restrictions; and the power of hitting out right and left, and "nobbling" a Kanaka who objected to Jack or Jonathan doing just as he liked in his—the native's—house, exchanged for a strict executive, which really tried to punish all breaches of missionary-made laws. The traders, too, backed up by planters, who had been settling in large numbers, wanted to be free from missionary control. Freedom meant the sale of unlimited gin and rum; it meant the power of buying freehold land cheap, and of growing sugar out of which to make more rum. Happily the missionaries had the ear of the King, and just managed to hold their ground, though to do so they felt constrained to join in the foreigners' cry for annexation to America. The seizing by France of Tahiti and the Marquesas accentuated this cry: "If you don't straightway put yourself under Uncle Sam's flag, some fine day the French will come and make you all Roman Catholics by main force."

Then the Californian gold fever, in 1848, gave a great impulse to the annexationists. Here was a splendid market suddenly opened for oranges, fresh vegetables, cattle. The island ports were filled as if by magic with eager Yankee skippers, who paid, not in rum, but in hard cash; and the Kanakas were told that this was but a foretaste of what would be the normal state of things if only they would be annexed. The step might be taken at any moment; for when Kamehameha the Third, succeeding his short-lived father, had got from France and England guarantees of independence, the United States had distinctly refused to join.

"We don't covet your little bits of islands; but we shan't say we shall prevent you from joining us, if by-and-by you like to do so," said the Cabinet of Washington; and the very Democratic Constitution passed in 1840 by Dr. Judd and Mr. Wylie, an eccentric Scot who, having made a large fortune in Mexico, settled in the islands, tended, of course, still more to draw them towards the States.

Had the third Kamehameha lived, they must have drifted into annexation. But he, like the rest of his race, had "brandy in the blood," and when he died suddenly in 1854, the direct line came to an end. He was succeeded by his adopted son, Prince

Alexander Liholiho, whose mother was a daughter of Kamehameha the First.

With the new King came in a thoroughly new policy; for, in 1848, he and his elder brother Lot had made the grand tour, and had got thoroughly in love with monarchy and aristocracy. Naturally enough; for in the States—that land of theoretic equality—which Dr. Judd had arranged for them to visit first, the young Liholiho had found themselves treated like "niggers." France was too busy with her revolution to take much notice of them; but in England they were made a great deal of. Royalty took them up, and they became "the fashion," as Prince Le Boo had been in the good old days of George the Third.

So Kamehameha the Fourth (that was his title) was dead against annexation; and when, in 1856, he married his school-fellow, Emma, he might have got on as well as any King in the world, could he have had the moral courage to do as our Henry the Fifth is said to have done—deport all the ill-conditioned Falstuffs and Nymys who, drunken and dissolute as the crew of Comus, stuck to him under the title of aides-de-camp, secretaries, and personal friends.

Queen Emma eagerly put in practice the lessons of her adopted father, Dr. Rook. She founded a hospital, with good, well-paid physicians; fenced off Leper-Island; and took every means of making head against the rapid decrease of the native race. So long as her husband was with her, her influence kept him straight; but among the Kanakas woman has always been the inferior being; the missionaries, moreover, had, from her cradle, taught the Queen submission; and so she only remonstrated, instead of insisting on the banishment of the King's "friends."

Once she did insist. The Royal brothers, their sister Princess Victoria, and the Queen, had been dining with the aides and secretaries. The ladies had retired, and smoking and drinking was going on. Suddenly there was a woman's cry in the Palace garden; and when the King and his brother rushed out, they found that an aide had grossly insulted the Princess. He was given in charge; but next day his young wife begged so hard: "he had drunk too much, and he made a sad mistake; he took the Princess for one of the Queen's waiting-women," that the King would have let him off. "No," said Emma, "his excuse is worse than his crime."

Are my ladies-in-waiting to be treated in that way by a drunken Englishman?"

So the aide was shipped next night to San Francisco, vowing that he would take vengeance for the insult offered in his person to the British flag.

For some time the King kept straight; and, making Mr. Wyllie his Foreign Minister and Prince Lot his Home Secretary, he had the satisfaction of getting the Queen and the Prince of Wales to stand sponsors for his son. But to get a Royal god-mother does not, in these days, ensure that protection of which the poor Kanakas stood in need.

The States stood aside, annexation seeming hopeless; but France came in, and insisted on free importation of wines and spirits; and, as England would not say "No," Mr. Wyllie had to give way, and, in 1857, to throw the country open to the fiery deluge. Of course we did not say "no," for, though the French out of bravado insisted on the treaty, it was we (and the Germans) who profited by it. For one hogshead of French liquor, at least a hundred came in from London and Hamburg.

Two years after, the King and Queen, the aides, and Mr. Neilson, the private secretary, were spending two months' holiday in Maui. Neilson was a sad drunkard, whom Emma had often begged her husband to get rid of. It was an idle time, away from Court etiquette; and every night drink and play went on unchecked. The King, well educated and cultured, behaved like a polished gentleman so long as he was sober; but was liable, when drunk, to fits of almost madness. Day after day, despite Emma's remonstrances, he sat with Neilson and the rest, soaking himself with brandy.

Once a quarrel arose; Neilson was grossly impudent, and the King, with an oath, shot him dead. Full of remorse, he wanted to abdicate; but the people would not hear of his doing so. Addresses of condolence poured in; and he seemed more of a King than ever when he had got from England a Bishop and whole staff of High Church clergy.

The Queen went along with him in this sudden change from the simple Nonconformity of the missionaries to Anglican ritual. She hoped the interest he took in it would keep him from drink; and so it did, combined with his sorrow for the death, in 1862, of his young son.

"I shall die young," he used often to

say, "but I shall outlive him." He did, but he outlived him less than eighteen months.

Prince Lot, whom he had named as his successor, had much more strength of character than his brother. Like his great ancestor, he loved to be alone; and, on his accession, the fool's paradise of aides and secretaries came to an end. He kept his own counsel so well that, in 1864, when the delegates met to reform the Constitution, the annexation party looked for an immediate success.

Everybody was startled when the King sent down to the House a proposal to substitute for universal suffrage—they had had it for years—a property qualification, and to limit naturalisation, and the power of voting, to those who had been some years on the islands. This was a thunder-clap; but King Lot did not stop there. When the delegates hummed and ha'd and proposed amendments, he came into their midst and said:

"This matter is of vital importance. If it is not passed, I see that we shall drift into a Republic; and you don't seem inclined to pass it, so I dissolve Parliament at once."

Happier than Charles the First, he had the people with him. The American party tried to stir up a riot, but failed, and King Kamehameha the Fifth was so firmly in the saddle that Emma thought she might safely go on a visit to Europe. Everyone knows how well she was received by our Queen, and how, with her simple dignity and unaffected goodness, she showed herself worthy of her good reception.

The French Emperor and Empress, too, treated this granddaughter of an English sailor with marked respect. She spent a winter in Italy; was fêted in the United States, and conveyed by the United States' Admiral Thatcher from San Francisco to Honolulu.

The sight of poverty, unknown in her islands, had impressed her more than the splendours of Windsor or Versailles; and she came back more than ever devoted to good works. Would she marry the King? No; her High Church feelings shrank from committing, even for the good of her country, what Anglicans call sin. Lot was so much chagrined at her final refusal, that he would not marry; and at his death, in 1872, the Kamehamehas came to a total end. Unhappily, the Queen refused the offer of the throne, and gave her support to Lot's cousin, Prince William Lunailo, very popular, but very drunken, though

seemingly of such an iron constitution that his orgies were supposed to do him no harm. William was a Philippe Egalité among the chiefs, the only one who had gone in for republican institutions. True to his principles, he would not adopt a successor, and thirteen months after his accession the throne was again vacant. This time Emma came forward as a candidate; but, though she was the idol of the lower classes, the House decided, by thirty-nine votes to six, in favour of David Kalakaua, whose large family seemed to give hope of a fixed succession. There was a riot; the Assembly House was wrecked, the archives burnt, the furniture destroyed; everything done to give good Queen Emma the greatest sorrow at the folly of her partisans. The sailors from the English and American ships of war had to be called in to establish order.

Last March Queen Emma died; and now "the King of the Cannibal Islands"—for one of his predecessors was the hero of the good old song—has taken a new line. He is going in for annexation. Perhaps he has a native Bismarck among his counselors, or a foreigner whose personal ambition outruns his zeal for the extension of trade. No doubt, too, the news—we trust it is not premature—that the native will not surely die out—that, since the precautions against leprosy and the stamping out of other diseases, there has even been a very slight increase—has given him courage. Anyhow, he is said to be asserting a suzerainty over the Marshall Islands and the Gilberts—about as far from him as California is—and even suggesting that he ought to have a word in the settlement of the dispute about the Carolines. Bravo, Kanaka King; the great thing is to ensure the persistence of your race. It would be a pity for that strange people who inhabit what some take to be the mountain peaks of a submerged continent to die out; and if only their chiefs give up fire-water, and listen to the doctor as well as to the missionary, there is some hope of their lasting on. The missionaries have done a wonderful work in the Sandwich Isles; the marvellous transformation is mainly due to the dogged zeal of men like Judd. But it is not enough to teach every Kanaka to read and write, and to clothe them all in calico—which, by the way, has helped to kill them off, for, throwing aside their new-fangled garments when they go to bed, they are more susceptible than of yore to night chills. "Civilisation is a fine thing," the

Kanakas might say, "but if we are all to be sent to heaven in the process, it might have been better to remain barbarians."

FORTH.

Not my own waves that thunder on the shore;
Not my own wild wind sweeping o'er the seas;
Not my own music in the mighty roar
That makes its chords of all the yellowing trees;
Not my own skies that shine in gloom and gleam,
Over the turbid waters in their strife;
Not my own wide horizon's pale grey dream.
In yon faint glimpses of the fair hills of Fife.
Yet, as two meeting in a foreign land,
Hailing the subtle link of glance or tone,
Stretch eagerly to clasp a kindred hand,
That pulses with the blood that warms his own,
So, yearning always for my English North,
I linger, listening lovingly, by Forth.

FROM STRATFORD TO LONDON.

EVER since Washington Irving set the example, the travellers—or, as they generally prefer to style themselves, the pilgrims into Shakespeare land, have in goodly numbers given to the world a record of their sensations and ideas. They tell us what they feel, as they stand in the upper room, or in the lower room, or in the coal-cellar of the house in Henley Street; or as they try, not always successfully, to construe the dog-Latin on the monument in the church; or as they view the thatched roof of Anne Hathaway's cottage, the last-named being a lion never left undone by Americans. Sometimes, and with abundant reason, they will venture to hint that the "song of sixpence" is a little too much sung in Stratford. Sixpence here, sixpence there, is the cry. By the way, do Scotchmen ever visit Stratford? I met one pilgrim just turning his back on the shrine, deeply vexed in spirit on this account; but the influence of the Bard had apparently swayed his soul powerfully, for as we sat over our supper of eggs and bacon, he dropped into poetry as follows:

Sing a Song of Sixpence. Sixpence is the charge.
For what we've got to offer, sure the sum is not too large.
Sixpence for the Birthplace, and then, if you are willing,
The same for the Museum, just to make the even shilling;
Sixpence for the Theatre, or you'll be in the lurch,
And sixpence—what's the matter?—is the fee to view the Church.
And sixpence—nay, good sir, I prithee, do not curse and swear,
Take it for all in all, you'll ne'er look on the like elsewhere.

I am not a great traveller; but I don't think you ever will.

My own visit to Stratford on this occasion was undertaken for purely geographical reasons. I thought no more of the birthplace of Shakespeare than of the birthplace of Podgers. I went to Stratford, simply because it was the most convenient point to take to the water on the river Avon, and work my way back to London on the smooth keel of a rowing-boat, instead of by the grinding and rattling railway. Before I started, I received many warnings from sympathetic friends, as to the perils and difficulties of the voyage, especially in the part which lay between Stratford and Evesham. None of the locks could be opened, and the boat would have to be lifted at every one. At a certain point, indeed, we were informed that we would be obliged to carry our boat for half-a-mile across a meadow. Then the millers were hostile to boating adventurers, some of them keeping fierce dogs for the harassing of the same, and all of them throwing obstacles—concrete ones sometimes—in their way. Then there were shoals and sandbanks innumerable, and if we escaped the violence of millers, we should probably find a watery grave on account of these.

Our crew consisted of myself—promoted to the arduous and responsible office of captain, apparently because I was expected to obey implicitly all the commands of the crew; a young lady, whom we christened *Palinura* after the worthy of the *Æneid*, because of her intense love of steering, when compared with rowing; and a public school boy, with feet and legs which had a marvellous trick of being all over the boat, who was known as "The Infant." Him we appointed caterer; and I am bound to say that he kept the luncheon-basket well supplied throughout the voyage.

We launched our boat below the ruined lock at Stratford, so we had nothing to do with the passage of the first obstruction; and, bad as its present plight is, it is no worse than that of all the other locks and weirs, eight in number, down to Evesham. So one at least of the woeful forebodings of our friends was correct; but after all, the unshipping of the luggage, the hauling out and relaunching of our light double sculling gig, and the reloading and embarkation, were not great trouble to us who had devoted a long summer day to the seventeen miles between Evesham and Stratford. The portage of half-a-mile, I am glad to say, we found to be an imaginary terror, as was also the alleged ferocity of

the Midland miller and his belongings. May I never meet more churlish foes than these; nay, I will go further, and indulge in a wish that I may always meet friends as ready and courteous as several of them proved to be at certain junctures, when a little help and information with regard to weirs and sandbanks were most welcome. As a rule, the miller's boy would be on the look-out from a lofty window, and would hurry down to lend us a hand, and on one occasion, the miller's daughter, a most charming young lady, left her angling, and directed us into the right channel.

A poet or a painter, wishing to sing or paint the placid beauty of rural England, might look in vain for a better type than that which abounds in this upper reach of the Avon. The full, even-flowing stream, bounded now by sloping woods and now by level stretches of rich pasture; the sleek and shapely cattle that saunter slowly up to the bank to have a look at the unwonted sight of a boat, when they are not enjoying too much the process of digestion to rise from their grassy couch; the soft green magnificence of the elm-tree foliage, the cool grey gleam of the willow branches as the wind lifts them, and the stately sentinel-like forms of the Lombardy poplars, rising above the copses and hedgerows; the glorious wealth of wild-flower bloom, loose-strife, willow herb, forget-me-not, fringing the stream with a border of dazzling colour, which shines up scarcely less brilliant from the reflecting surface of the water; these would be the leading points to be grasped and reproduced. Then, defying all the powers of the artist, there is a charm in the stillness and well-nigh perfect solitude; save when passing the riparian villages, one meets with scarcely an indication of the existence of man. The eye may now and then behold him in the shape of an angler, deeply engaged in watching the movements of four or more floats—your Avon fishermen rarely fishes with less than four rods—and the ear may now and then recognise his presence in the shriek of the distant locomotive or the ringing of the village-school bell.

In solitude there is always a sense of sadness, but with me the deepest note of pathos is struck when I feel that the solitude has been made. The solitude of the Australian bush, or of mid ocean, is a necessary attribute of Nature's unreclaimed or irreclaimable kingdom; but in clambering over these ruined, grey-stone locks, I

was reminded that the now deserted river was once a busy highway of trade. Venice, perhaps, is more picturesque now than it was in the height of its commercial prosperity; but there still remains the sense of sadness which springs from failure and desertion; and this I could not help feeling on the Avon, though the larks were singing in full chorus, and the air was filled with the scent of the bean-fields, and the bank and meadows were radiant with all the hues of June.

A few miles above Evesham, is a noted hostelry, the "Fish and Anchor;" and just below this, as we were being borne gallantly by a rapid stream down a wide reach, we were suddenly made aware of the presence of one of the terrible shoals against which we had been warned. There was a groaning under the keel as the boat swung round, and she heeled over so much that a ducking seemed likely. My companions, light in mind and body, suggested that I, more solid in either sense, should step overboard into the shallow stream and let them float off, promising to return and reclaim me when I should have waded up to my middle; but this method failed to win my approval. Ultimately, by concentrating all the weight in the stern and the bow alternately, we allowed the boat to wriggle into deep water, and sculled gaily away.

To see the town of Evesham aright, one should approach it as we did. Once I passed through it before by railway, and all the memory I bore away was of the square top of a bell-tower, and a station yard filled with cabbages; but how different it looked when seen from the river! The picturesque houses slope down to the water's edge, the bell-tower stands up majestically on the brow of a green hill—the architect surely must have recently looked at Merton College tower when he designed it—and one of the handsomest modern bridges in England spans the stream. The town is full of fine old houses. At the top of the High Street on the left stands a quaint block of ancient dwellings seemingly untouched; and between these, running under a fragment of the Abbey buildings, is the way into the churchyard, with its two churches—where the good people of Evesham may take turn and turn about in doing their devotions—and the noble bell-tower, or "clocker," from which their births, and marriages, and deaths, are duly rung out.

But we must give topography a wide berth, or we shall never get on to London.

Those who wish to know anything of Evesham and its surroundings cannot do better than turn back to the "Chronicles of the English Counties," and see what the author of those papers had to say when he wrote of Worcestershire. I certainly shall ever be grateful to him for the items of local history anent the famous battle of Evesham; for Palinura, who was consumed with a romantic attachment for Simon de Montford, insisted on tramping off to see the battle-field.

Just outside the town some magnificent turnips were growing, and these, I explained, drew their nourishment from the blood and bones of the Norman barons, who, as some simple-minded historians teach, died fighting for the liberties of the Saxon churls; but still she was not satisfied, and wanted to see the spot where Simon had stood when he said: "The Lord have mercy upon our souls, for our bodies belong to the enemy," and the place where he finally fell. By the help of the fragments of the Chronicles that still clung to my memory—imagination filling up the gaps—I was able to speak in an authoritative manner, and to satisfy the youthful thirst for knowledge. So ultimately we embarked, and set sail for Tewkesbury.

But we were not fated to see Tewkesbury that day. It would have been a good day's work for a crew who "put their backs into it," and this practice was one which did not find favour with us. Our progress was leisurely at the best, and we should have been foolish indeed to hurry through such a lovely country. People who want to "put their backs into it" should go boating about Peterborough, or on the Eau-brink Cut. Though the locks are in going order on this part of the river, it is a matter of time to get through them, and, as nobody ever seems to come up the river, they almost always have to be filled before one can get in.

We were now in the heart of the fruit country, and a wolfish gleam would shine from the Infant's eyes as we floated under orchards full of plum-trees literally breaking down under the weight of fruit, and now and then he suggested that he should jump ashore to see if he couldn't "buy" some for dessert; but I, remembering the favourite practice of youth for the acquisition of fruit, when no one was looking, put a stern veto on this. Our progress, as I have before remarked, was slow, but we couldn't wait for the next Justices' sitting.

Then, again, the Infant's determination to have lunch in what he called "decent fashion," and Palinura's love of ease always necessitated a halt of an hour about one o'clock; this afternoon, five o'clock tea consumed half-an-hour more; so we soon gave up all idea of reaching Tewkesbury, and seeing the village of Eckington marked on the map, determined to stop there; but to our surprise and consternation, found that Eckington consisted of a bridge—a very fine old bridge indeed—and nothing else. At least, that was all we could see from the river—there was no house, nowhere to leave the boat, and darkness was coming on fast. Eckington must be somewhere; but it was hard to determine where, as one angler told us it was three-quarters of a mile away, and another three miles. So we resolved to push on to the ferry at Twinning's Fleet, where at least we could find shelter and leave our boat.

The last of the locks was half-a-mile lower down, and beside it there stands a gaunt, ruined mill—ruined, that is, as far as its glass windows are concerned. The failing light, the dark woods at the back, and the tangled growth of weeds about the place, which was ten years old at the utmost, made a picture of the blankest desolation. There was a cold wind blowing up stream, the rain was just beginning to fall, and the prospect of a six miles' row was not inviting. Someone suggested that we should camp in the deserted mill, and this probably we should have done, had the wind been less biting and the windows better glazed. Uncanny as the place looked, it was much too new to possess a ghost, unless, indeed, the man who built it may have drowned himself in the pool; or the miller who worked it may have hanged himself upon the crane, having no corn to hoist. Now we did "put our backs into it;" but there was no scenery to look at, and the blood had to be kept in circulation. However, at the first turn of the river another mill came in sight—a real, old-fashioned, red-roofed, grey-stone mill, in full going order; and here we found a miller who was more than friendly. He would take care of our boat and carry our bags over to Eckington, which, it seemed, was only half-a-mile distant from this point, and have everything ready for us for an early start in the morning.

Eckington is a famous fishing station. The first inn we called at was full of jolly anglers. We went farther on, but I cannot think we fared worse in the hands of the

genial host just over the way. We were a draggled, disreputable-looking crew; but he gave us of his best, and with a hearty, kindly manner, not charged in the bill, and not "on draught" in certain hosteleries I know of; so that we went our way next morning reflecting that in some respects a village inn may be a very efficient substitute for a grand hotel.

From Eckington to Tewkesbury the Avon flows through a flat and less picturesque country than higher up. Bredon Hill, which we first saw before we reached Evesham, shows its huge ridge, now on the right and now on the left hand. As the massive square tower of the Abbey came in sight, I remembered with regret that there was once a great battle fought at Tewkesbury, and that Palinura would for certain want to stand on the very spot where "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence" did young Edward to death. I had a firm conviction that the battle was fought close to the town, between the two rivers. I explained this to the student of history, and remarked how fortunate it was that we were able to "do" the battle-field from the boat. For once she agreed with me; but perhaps the rain, which was coming down in sheets, may have made her the more inclined to accept my dictum. We landed dripping, and went to dry ourselves and get some food at the "Swan." We were sad at leaving the lovely Avon in such unpropitious weather; but the Infant's heart was heavy chiefly because there would be no picnic lunch to-day.

Tewkesbury is a charming town. It is a busy, prosperous place, but the current of modern life has not been so rapid and feverish as to bear down the landmarks of the past. Right opposite our hotel stood "Clarence House," where Clarence might very well have stayed—I do not affirm that he did—the night before or after the battle. The Abbey is one of the glories of English architecture, and has been written about by Professor Freeman; so let the unlearned beware how they call round arches Anglo-Saxon. Its grandeur must strike the dullest perception. It is the thing everybody sees in Tewkesbury; but there was one other feature in the town which I marked particularly—one I have never seen noticed. This is, that many of the houses in the middle of the town seem to have beautiful gardens behind them. You look up a narrow passage under an archway, and beyond the gloom, the eye lights upon a patch of sunlit green, flecked with brilliant

colours, and festooned with Virginia creeper and vine.

Tewkesbury Lock opened to us, and we were on the waters of the broad Severn. Broad rivers, however, are out of sympathy with our peculiar form of boating; and this reach, and the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal up to Stroud were the least attractive parts of the trip; but, on leaving Stroud, the Golden Valley—which well deserves its name—opened before us. This lovely nook in the Cotswolds is, indeed, a gem. The bold rolling hills on either side are dotted and crowned with beautiful woods, dense and luxuriant in growth and brilliant in tint.

A Swiss valley can show—enclosing mountains nearly twenty times as high as the homely Cotswolds—perpendicular, bare rock by the square mile; but to me, bare rock is never beautiful, whether it stands on end or lies flat. It has snow enough for ten of our winters; but, to my taste, a field of barley lighted up with poppies and corn-flowers is a fairer jewel on a hill-side than a snow-field or a dirty glacier; and, if anyone finds the stunted, distorted, angular fir trees in the Rhone Valley more to his taste than our English elms and oaks—why, let him go there and stop there.

Along this valley the Thames and Severn Canal makes its way, going up stairs, as it were, through twenty-eight locks, till it reaches the summit level at Sapperton. The locks often come four or five together, so progress is naturally slow.

The passage of Sapperton Tunnel—some two miles in length—is the grand episode of the voyage. There is no towing path, and sculling by the light of a single candle is not very efficient; so we pushed and punted ourselves along with boat-hooks. The echo from the stroke of the steel upon the brickwork rolled along the vaulted roof, and our one candle's flame was reflected a hundred-fold on the ripples made by the passage of our boat. It was a new experience, decidedly Stygian in its character; and the Infant came out strong in quotations from the Sixth Æneid. He had lunched before entering the tunnel, so was in excellent spirits.

The country on the other side of the Cotswold is tamer in its features. At Thames Head one sees the chimney of the pumping station, which is supposed to take tithe of the infant Thames for the benefit of the canal; but it gave out no smoke, and this explained the fact that there were

but two feet of water, and barely that, along the summit level. A little farther on we met a gentleman who was interested in the canal, and we learned from him how it was that the pumping-engines were standing idle.

Not long ago the Great Western Railway bought a sufficient amount of Canal shares to acquire what is called a controlling position on the Board, and the earliest use they made of their control was to leave off pumping, and so close the canal for barge traffic. I have since learnt that, had we been ten days later, even our light boat would not have floated. Seeing that the Railway Company have so large a stake in the canal, it would appear strange that they should thus set to work to ruin their own property; but listen. It is only partially their property after all; and the railway which follows the same line of country belongs to them entirely, so it is only natural that they should abjure the half loaf in favour of the whole. A man will get rich in flinging sixpences into the sea, if a shilling falls into his hand for everyone he throws. Of course, things are not working so satisfactorily with the other shareholders in the canal. Their half loaf is gone, or is rapidly going, and there is no quartern in the cupboard for them. It is no profit to them that the canal traffic is all shifted to the railway. There is indeed a special Act of Parliament to protect their interests, and to bind the Great Western Railway to maintain the canal; but then Railway Companies do not care much for Acts of Parliament. They are not the terror to an august Corporation that they are to a single individual. To break an Act by omission is a very easy matter, and a very safe one where a railway company is the offender. A public-spirited man must be found to call upon the High Court of Justice to intervene; and when he has made his challenge he will find himself confronted by an array of barristers, and solicitors, and engineers, whom the railway company keeps to fight its battles. Railway companies, it is well known, will fight to the last ditch, consequently, men with public spirit enough to beard them are rare. It is to be hoped, however, that in this matter, one will arise, before one of the finest engineering works of this century falls utterly to ruin.

Men of business must demand of their representatives, on economic grounds, how it is that they have thus suffered the monopolists to further strengthen their

position. I merely plead on behalf of the ever-increasing body of townsmen who prefer to take their summer holiday in a boat, beneath an English sky, amongst English meadows. Of course there is the Thames, but the Thames in these days of house-boats and steam launches seems, as far as its favourite reaches are concerned, to be destined to endure the humours of a perpetual Bank holiday. A waterway like the Thames and Severn Canal, is indeed a rare find to men who prefer nature undefiled by nigger minstrels, and steam whistles, and the cockney ostentation of barge shanties. To such as these the crowded river becomes every year less delightful, and they will push on beyond Lechlade into the deserted canal—just as the cyclists have peopled once more the deserted turnpike roads—if the canal be really a canal, and not a dry ditch.

But while I have been anathematising the Great Western Railway, we have floated past Cirencester, where, by-the-by, we stopped the night, and are at Siddington locks—five of them all close together. No more going up, up, up. The descent had begun, and by the time we passed the last lock we had sunk fifty feet and more. There was plenty of water now, and plenty of fish too. An Avon fisherman with his four or five rods would soon fill his basket here, I should fancy, but not a single angler did we see all the way.

We passed the town of Cricklade, with its pinnacled church-tower rising from amongst the elms about half-a-mile to our right. We were now unmistakeably in the Thames valley, and now and then could catch a glimpse of the river itself. Down to Inglesham Round House the country is quite pretty enough to make it worth while for a pedestrian to include the towing-path in a walking tour. But the latter part of it we saw imperfectly, as it was almost dark by the time we passed through Inglesham Lock, and found ourselves at last in the Thames.

Lechlade is a quaint old place; and one relic of mediævalism is specially to be noted. The streets are as dark at night as they were in the reign of King John. For Lechlade gas has been discovered, Mr. Edison has laboured, and other Americans have struck oil, in vain. If the kindly coal-merchant who took care of our boat, had not lighted our steps to the inn with a lantern, we might have fallen a dozen times. If Conrad Ney, the good vicar who rebuilt the church in King Hal's

time, were to rise from his tomb, he would be only moderately surprised at the altered state of things. He would find no railway to perplex him; for though Lechlade figures in Bradshaw, the station is a mile or more from the town.

The ancient stone bridges which span the river in its upper reaches, are some of the most picturesque relics of old England that are left. Lechlade Bridge and St. John's Bridge have been in a measure spoilt by the rebuilding of the centre arch; but Radcot and New Bridge are untouched, and with their narrow pointed arches and angular buttresses, built in the warm grey-tinted stone of the district, seem just what a Thames bridge should be. So indeed the builders of the bridge at Clifton Hampden must have thought, for that is almost an exact reproduction in brick of Radcot Bridge.

The river scenery down to Oxford is tame, perhaps, but it can hardly be called uninteresting. The wooded ridge of Faringdon follows one almost as persistently as do Wittenham Clumps lower down, for the benefit of those who are not satisfied with the level green pastures, and the elms and willows, and the happy-looking cattle with nothing to do but eat and drink, and lie in the shade; but I confess that a landscape such as I have described is quite good enough for me, especially on a roasting day.

I would warn the traveller who has never seen Oxford before, against approaching it by the way of the upper river. Surely beautiful city never had such squalid surroundings. Gas-works, coal-wharves, railway-yards, are now our portion in place of fresh green meadows, and it is almost like entering another world when one shoots under Folly Bridge into the full glory of the Christ Church elms, with the river gay with the College barges, and glittering in the sun, and the grey tower of Iffley Church amidst the distant woods.

We spent six days more in delicious loitering down to Hampton Court; but nowadays, a description of this part of our voyage would be as superfluous as a description of the highway between Charing Cross and the Bank of England. So I must have done, gratified at having recalled, in the process of setting them down on paper, the memories of many pleasant scenes, which anyone who reads may search for with profit next summer.

THE OLD "R.A."

A STORY IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

SEBASTIAN found it necessary to have very numerous sittings, and it so happened that his mother—who had come unexpectedly to town to consult a great physician for her husband, who was out of health—surprised a very pretty tableau. The fair-haired, milky-complexioned model sat on the dais, with drooping head and very pink cheeks, her long, white, angelic drapery trailing round her, and kneeling by her, with both her hands clasped in his and rapturously held to his breast, was Mrs. Fellowes's immaculate Sebastian!

A dreadful vision of virtue overthrown, of the temptations of Babylon, and fair-haired, deceitful Delilahs, passed through the mother's brain, and made her utter a kind of scream; but Sebastian was not at all perturbed, though his poor angel felt ready to sink through the floor in innocent shame. He jumped up cheerfully and embraced his mother, with a surprised enquiry as to how she got there. She told him in a few incoherent sentences how his father was ill, and had come up to see the great physician, and how she had left him to rest after his journey, thinking to surprise her dear Sebastian; but now, really, who is this—this young person?

"This young lady, mother," Sebastian answered with some emphasis, "is going to be my wife. Come here, Mary. I hope you and my dear good mother will love each other."

It was very difficult and awkward for poor Mary to move in her flowing garments, and she felt altogether shy and miserable; but Mrs. Fellowes was far too soft and sentimental a soul not to melt at the situation, and a very few words more made her weep over the girl whom she folded in a large embrace and kissed, with the long, spaniel-like curls tickling her face so that it was all Mary could do to stand it.

"And, mother, I have more good news for you," Sebastian said presently, when the situation had become less acute. "In spite of the set some of the Academicians have made against me, they have made an 'A.R.A.' of me."

"A.R.A." at thirty, Sebastian Fellowes at forty was a fully enrolled member of the noble army of Royal Academicians, privileged to exhibit eight pictures on the

line; a privilege of which he availed himself every year for more than twenty years, with scarcely a gap. He was the "luckiest beggar," his friends said.

He took a large house in Kensington, and built a studio. He was very generous and kind to young artists who were tractable, to all his relations and old friends. He narrowed, of course, and hardened round a certain set of opinions. He was sure to do that. He got intolerant and more intolerant of differing beliefs, of all Bohemianism, irreligion, disrespectability of any kind—of theatres, of smoking, and of many other things which most men call harmless and necessary.

His early strict training, the narrow groove of the old Birmingham household had first shaped his mind, and it was one to grow only in a certain shape. No one said any ill of him; he was a good deal ridiculed, it is true, but that did not touch him, and in his home he was adored.

When his father died suddenly, some years after Sebastian's marriage, he took his mother to live with him, and, astonishing to say, mother and wife agreed. Mary was gentle, malleable, grateful, devoted. The two had one common object of adoration; they united in declaring Sebastian to be the first, best, dearest, most gifted of men; in admiring every dab of his brush, every line made by his pencil.

They had an album filled with newspaper scraps—of course, all eulogistic notices of his pictures. The nasty critiques, the sneering or ridiculing ones, found their way silently to the waste-paper basket, and lit the fire.

Mary thanked Heaven every night that she had found such a husband; his mother that she had so good a son. As for him, he was very happy. Mary was the best of wives, and he was so content with his lot that he hardly grieved over what was her one secret sorrow—that they had no children.

He would have liked a son to inherit his genius; she yearned for a daughter to be as blessed as she was. For the rest they had no troubles, or only very few. Sometimes he felt as if he were rather unappreciated, that with all his efforts art was not purified; that the public taste was growing coarse and depraved. They passed his large Biblical or allegorical pictures by, and flocked to some realistic, horrible, or sensual picture—these were his epithets for them. Perhaps the world would not have echoed them.

The papers had a nasty trick of sneering at his "smooth sentimentalism," his "impossible anatomy," and so on. He only thought the world growing bad, but it distressed him a little to see the people led astray, and pure art despised. Mary felt it too, but she managed to soothe him at home with her boundless sympathy, and the innocent flattery of her belief in him. He had been prudent; had made good investments; and, with his father's legacy, was rich enough, if not exceedingly so. When he had passed his forty-fifth birthday, his mother died as gently as she deserved to do, mildly giving up a life which had been a tranquil one; which had been lived, perhaps, not in the highest air, but had been very sweet and wholesome in its narrow, guarded sphere. Sebastian felt her loss as good sons ought; but he had a great consolation, which he repeated constantly to himself—he had done his duty throughout; he had made her happy. In this, as in other respects, he had nothing to reproach himself with.

He did not exhibit his full number of pictures at the next Academy Exhibition; but a rumour put about that he was giving up, that he had painted himself out, roused him to great energy, and a determination to disabuse the public mind of so absurd an idea; and the year following, he worked so industriously at covering his large canvases that his wife trembled for his health. She dreaded his falling a martyr to the demands of his art; but Sebastian's was not an exhausting Muse; he had none of the irritability, the restlessness, the fits of indolence and despondency that genius knows. That genius of his, in which he himself and Mary—and no one else in the world—so devoutly believed, was only a talent dressed up, only the fatal facility of his youth, which his old master—long since dead in a garret—had decried in his student days. And talent is not exhausting; it has none of the maddening demands, the fierce contradictions of genius; it goes hand-in-hand very well with industry and wealth.

"What a truly awful picture! Whose is it—and what is it supposed to represent?"

One young art student put this question to another in the Academy of only a few years since, as they paused in front of a vast and highly-coloured canvas.

"Don't you know? Whose else could it be?" answered the other, laughing.

"The inimitable Fellowes, R.A., of course; though he has rather surpassed himself this year. 'An Allegory of Life and Death,' he calls it. Blest if I can make out anything but a lot of disjointed, sprawling creatures in flopping drapery. You need never ask who has painted any particularly awful picture—safe to find it's an R.A., and generally Fellowes."

An elder man joined them at the moment—a rather rough-looking, grey-bearded man with bright eyes; an artist working his way up doggedly, by means of the sort of pictures which Sebastian Fellowes had always denounced.

"Don't talk so loud, you fellows!" he said, tapping one of them on the shoulder. "I saw the painter of this lovely acre of canvas close by just now. He generally haunts the neighbourhood of his works of art; and your remarks might be painful."

"But surely a picture exhibited publicly on the line is public property; and I shouldn't have thought, Mr. Murray, that you would be so very tender over old Fellowes. Aren't you and he at daggers drawn?"

"Ay! But somehow I've a sort of compassion for him; this exhibition is rather pathetic to me. He has got so hopelessly past his age, and he goes on believing in himself and thinking that others do so too; besides, he's really a good sort of worthy soul, and he looks haggard and altered. He's lost all his complacent dignity. Some one says that his wife died after a long illness, while he was painting that poor old daub—that figure's taken from her, they say."

The three moved on talking. They did not notice a tall man, who leant on the rail near the big picture, with his head down. A good many people might have failed to recognise Sebastian Fellowes, once so sleek, prosperous, stately; he had grown thin, grey, haggard-looking, all at once. A year and a half ago, the discovery that his wife—his other self, his Mary, who adored him and who was to him the pearl of all womankind, in spite of her fifty years and faded prettiness, in spite of her grey hairs and the altered lines of her once plump and comely figure—that she was marked out for death; that a few short years at most, perhaps months, of growing torture would end the happy communion between them, unspoilt, undisturbed for almost thirty years, which seemed but a day for the love they bore each other; this knowledge, the cruel tragedy of

swiftly overtaking Fate, crushed all the happiness out of the husband's life, and brought suddenly upon him the certainty of a hopeless woe. He kept it to himself, as a man must when the woman is to be spared; he was cheerful, hopeful to her, studiously commonplace for a long time, as if he did not see or know of any change; but this broke down—he found that it distressed her; that she would be relieved if they could share the burden, and they talked together of the days that were to come, and tried to comfort each other with the religion which they had worn all their lives without particularly feeling the need of it, perhaps, but which they now wanted to make a sufficient shelter against despair.

Ah, we talk and talk, we preach and pray, but when the heart is cold and sick, and we stand shivering at the edge of a dark precipice, over which we soon must go, how difficult it is to comfort our souls with any of the phrases which we called beliefs, and the consolations which availed for little sorrows! These were good, orthodox, believing souls; but there was a voice not to be silenced, that kept crying on in the wakeful, weeping heart of each. The wife was the first consoled; patience came with the rapidly approaching end; the husband, who took the part of the one who sustains and comforts, was most in need of support. He found a melancholy relief at times in painting; he would sanctify his grief, he said, and make out of it a help and message to the world, to other people who had to suffer as he did. He sat for hours while his wife slept after her opiates, and put many a really noble and beautiful thought, which haunted him in a dreamy way, into visible shape—at least he thought he put them. His allegory of Life and Death meant a great deal to him, and he felt as if it must speak plainly to the world.

After this he thought he would paint no more. He was conscious of a curious failing: a numbness of brain; a forgetfulness at times. He told himself that his day was done; that he would retire on this one great achievement, this message of his sorrow and love, and then give himself up to loneliness, to prayer—trying to knit his soul with that other soul that would soon be beyond his voice. He thought at times with a certain longing of the Roman Catholic Church; of retreats; of the still, dim churches where he had wandered in his travelling days; of lying at the foot of a crucifix in the silence, and calling upon

the Christ who had suffered; perhaps, though his Protestant conscience recoiled, he thought of the Mary whose name was so dear and sacred to him. He felt almost happy in moments when thus seated at this great picture of his, which was to be his masterpiece, when his mind soared into spiritual visions, and life seemed a mere short dream to be soon got through.

Before the picture was finished, his wife died. He crawled back the day after the funeral to his studio, and painted again. He seemed less lonely there than anywhere else, and he painted on, half-unconscious. It seemed to him all right and beautiful; he fancied that an angel guided his hand. No one saw the picture in the studio; people called and left kind messages, but he saw no one. He scarcely ate or slept, but grew every day greyer, more wasted, more altered; but he was not so utterly miserable till the picture—his only one—was sent to the Academy. Then his work in life seemed done; he could not paint any more, he could only sit before his easel looking with blank, unseeing eyes on a blank canvas, and waiting till his picture should speak for him to the world. This was all that he had to look forward to—only a chill phantom of a hope but still feebly glimmering upon the dark of his long, lone, dreary, companionless days. He sat in the studio motionless before the empty canvas on the easel, thinking of the early married years, when Mary sat and worked there, stopping her stitching and hemming to watch and admire; when they still hoped for the children to make their blithe noise in the large, quiet rooms, when youth, and hope, and enjoyment were their portion. He got up sometimes, moved by he knew not what vague impulse, and wandered into the room where, during those sad last months, which now seemed almost bliss by comparison, she had lain so white and patient on that couch which was now smoothed down, and empty like everything else.

He talked to himself, or to her, found himself asking questions and waiting for an answer when only silence mocked his ear; he was terrified as if by a crime, and thought himself growing an infidel, because it seemed to him that, when he called on Heaven, there was silence too, and only untenanted space all round him.

Poor Sebastian! Doubt had always been one of the sins of the world in his eyes, and even in this anguish of bereavement, and his sense of forsakenness, his

spirit was struggling against it with what force remained to him. The servants, who liked him—for he was a kind master, though a distant one—shook their heads over his looks and ways; he was not himself, they said, meaning much by the phrase, which, indeed, was most true. He was not himself; he had been torn asunder from the main support of his life, and the clutch of Giant Despair was on his heart.

A faint gleam of something like interest in the world revisited him on the day on which the Academy opened. He tried not to dwell upon the remembrance of all the other opening days when his proud, adoring wife had been with him, and all the exhibition centred to her in her particular R.A.'s seven or eight big pictures; when she gleaned all the complimentary remarks (alas! scanty enough lately) made by country folks, and women chiefly, which she could repeat to him, and refused to hear the scoffs and rude laughter that sometimes passed by her hero's work.

This great picture of his, his Allegory of Life and Death, painted, it seemed to him, with his very heart's blood, which meant to him all that was most sacred, tenderest, noblest in his mind, this must touch even a careless and depraved public, and speak from him to them as deep calls to deep. He took up his place near it, not from vanity now—he had had his days of vanity and self-conceit, he had been blinded by an ingenuous, not unloveable, sort of egotism ever since the old days of his studentship, when Hamlin abused him for his "fatal facility" and "want of devil"—but he was moved now by a different spirit; it was more the longing for human sympathy, by a desire to force the thoughtless world into an affinity with what seemed to the man broken with grief, the only mood worth attaining in this life of ours, with its momentary possibilities of disaster and misery. He listened, with all his soul on the stretch, with every nerve quivering for this touch, with an acuteness of hearing unusual to him, for the words of the passers-by.

He heard one after another, as they paused to give a curious, amused, cursory glance at this work of his supremest moments, throw it a light, ridiculing, frivolous remark. He heard men say, "Old Fellowes again! Why, he must be in his second childhood. Isn't it preposterous to cover the walls with this sort of stuff?" He heard the laughing voice of girls and boys: "Oh, goodness, what a picture!

What does it all mean? What's this great sprawling creature with the green face doing? What are all these miscellaneous things messing about here for? Chains, and money, and flowers—like an old curiosity shop! Isn't it too amusing?"

Every light, jesting word stung him like a whip of nettles. Amusing! Absurd! His great picture, his conception of the deepest, most tragical realities of life and sorrow! He started suddenly from his leaning position, and faced wildly about on the assembled crowd which was moving, laughing, buzzing before him, till his disordered, confused brain spun round as in a witches' dance. He looked from side to side, and out of the confusion one fact glared clearly at him. Everyone was given up to evil tastes and pursuits. This jeering, foolish mob were led astray by the false gods of the world. They were pushing each other, straining to see, eager to admire that picture there—which to him at this moment seemed inspired by Satan himself—that picture of Cleopatra and her women, the guileful "Serpent of Old Nile," with her shameless, flaunting charms; this, this was the modern idol, the taste of the art world of to-day! He threw out his arms wildly, and put some of the scorching anger that burnt in his brain into loud, strange words. He denounced the Cleopatra, the vile taste of the world, the sin and the shame, which were real enough to him in spite of his half delirium; the half frightened, shrinking, half amused looks and whispers of the people, who fell away out of the reach of his swinging arms, and stared at his haggard face and burning eyes, only spurred him on to louder, fiercer denunciations, and more unsparing epithets of blame. Two men who had seen him from a distance, made their way hastily towards him: one was the painter Murray; the other another artist, an old friend who owed much to Sebastian's kindness.

"The poor old man is beside himself," he said hastily; "he has been like that since his wife died. Let's stop it, and get him away if possible."

"If possible, before he does a mischief; make haste. He is quite mad, to judge from his looks."

The first speaker reached him, and took his arm with a firm but kindly grasp speaking soothingly in his ear.

"My dear Mr. Fellowes—it is hardly the place, is it? You won't want to make a scene here—you'll come away with me. My wife will be so glad to see you."

Sebastian ceased talking suddenly, and turned round on the speaker with a dazed and vacant stare.

"Eh!" he said, with not a touch of his old punctilious courtesy. "I don't know you or your wife—my wife is dead," he added, with a sudden pitiful drop in his voice; "she was a good woman. I should have liked you to know her. She is dead, and the people in London are all gone mad. They rave about that—that piece of meretricious audacity," he raised his tone again as he pointed with his long waving arm at the Cleopatra, "and sneer at my Allegory of Life and Death, which was meant to regenerate the world!"

"Yes, yes," cried the other, eager to get him away with as little fuss as possible, "it is shameful, astonishing; but I wouldn't stop here now, Mr. Fellowes. It will only tire you, and there is too much noise for people to hear what you say—suppose you write a paper and explain your picture—it's too subtle, too deep—come away—let's talk of it."

He drew him gently through the gaping crowd—the strange-looking, wild, altered grey-beard, who was once the serene, prosperous, handsome, stately Sebastian Fellowes, unrecognisable almost now, and a thing to stir pathos and pity.

In a few days there was this announcement in the "Times":

"On the sixth inst., very suddenly, Sebastian Fellowes, R.A., of — Square, Kensington."

Neil Murray, happening to light on Mr. Fellowes's friend Kelly, asked him some particulars of the death.

The good-natured little man looked grave.

"It was a tragedy—an odd ending of a commonplace, prosperous life. The poor old boy was quite mad; his brain seemed suddenly and utterly to have given way. I suppose the loss of his wife and not taking care of his health had begun it, and the reception of that unfortunate, inconceivable picture finished him. He never could bear that sort of thing well; but while he was all right he simply ignored criticism or ridicule, and put it down to jealousy or want of perception. He had the firmest, finest belief in himself. In the state he was in—worked up already to a queer pitch of excitement—it was too rough on him. The making a joke of what was so solemn a reality to him was the worst. He was quite, entirely beside

himself when I got him out of the Academy. I took him to his house, warned the servants, who seemed to have expected some such break-out, and sent for his old friend Dr. Harley. I called in the evening, and the servants said he had got very quiet, and had gone to lie down in their mistress's room. I waited a long while, and getting somehow a little uneasy, I went up at last, and as no one answered when I knocked, I went in. He was kneeling upon the floor, with his body thrown over a little couch. On the table was a manuscript, methodically pinned together—the most utter farrago of rubbish you can imagine—a treatise on art, of which he was the only living worthy representative; denunciation of painting of the nude; an exposition of his views on religion, all jumbled up together and dedicated to his faithful and adored wife. He was quite dead."

"Dead! But what killed him?"

"Of all men in the world the most unlikely, I should say, to do it—he had committed suicide. He had taken the morphia which was left in the bottle that was used for Mrs. Fellowes. Of course there was not a shadow of doubt as to his absolute insanity. After all, it is the very best thing that could have happened to him. His day was over in every sense. Oh, by the way, he has left all his unsold pictures to his native town. Don't you think they will make a wry face there over his bequest?"

"He has gone to find out the eternal 'if'!" said Murray thoughtfully—"a man who had no 'if' in his life. It is a curious end to a commonplace career. So the 'Allegory of Life and Death' wants an interpreter still!"

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NO. 959. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conscit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER III. AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

SIR ROY said no more.

He was quite satisfied that his pet scheme would succeed. He would have his darling with him. The old house would still be graced and beautified by her presence. She would be happy, or as nearly happy, as her nature would permit—for he said to himself shrewdly "a man who understands and suits a woman is infinitely preferable to one who only loves her."

And Neale, if somewhat weak and yielding, had no vices, and would let the wilful, capricious girl do pretty much as she pleased.

"It will be admirable in every way," he told himself, as he sat at dinner and looked at the two handsome faces—the girl's as delicate and pure as a white rose; the young fellow's bronzed, and manly, and full of fire and light.

Alexis was as cool and unembarrassed as ever. Occasionally she looked critically at her cousin, acknowledging to herself that she had rarely seen his equal for good looks. Long ago she had taken his mental measurement with the keen and merciless accuracy with which Nature had gifted her. She would always be the master-power, she knew, and would never do but what she chose. That thought pleased her.

"If I met a stronger will than mine, I should quarrel. I could never bend," she said to herself. "Certainly, as an institution, marriage is a mistake; but if a woman isn't married, after a certain time

she is neglected by one sex, and the other say spiteful things about her. Then there are the properties. Papa can't bear the idea of the Abbey going out of the family, and I am the last in the direct line. Yes, I suppose I must do it—some day."

Meanwhile, there was no hurry; and she played with her grapes; and glanced with half-amused consciousness at her cousin; and wondered if, after all, he had cared for her all these years. "I understand now why he was so embarrassed when I asked him whether 'his time' had come," she thought. "Poor, foolish, good-natured Neale! It must be odd to care like that! I can never imagine any individual becoming absolutely necessary to my happiness."

She left the table presently and went out into the grounds.

Sir Roy, in the jubilation of his spirits, filled his nephew's glass again, and drew his chair nearer.

"It will be all right," he said genially. "I have sounded her. It is just as I said. She is really fond of you, and quite ready to accept you when you ask. Isn't that good news, my boy?"

Neale's hand trembled so, that he hastily put down his glass. He felt absolutely confounded, and stared at his uncle as if he thought he had taken leave of his senses.

"No wonder you look surprised," continued Sir Roy. "Why, when you think of the chances that girl has had—wealth, station, titles—all refused! you ought to feel proud, and no mistake!"

"But, uncle," stammered Neale, "are you sure she said that? Are you not deceiving yourself?"

"Not in the least," answered the Baronet heartily. "You may plead your own cause when you will; only don't be in too

great a hurry," he added. "For, after all, marriage does make a difference, and I don't want to give up my pet yet awhile."

"But I was going to rejoin my regiment," muttered Neale stupidly. "I told you I could only stay a week. Then I must go to London; my leave is up."

"Well; what of that?" laughed Sir Roy. "Get the matter settled before you go. I've smoothed the way for you, I can tell you. I don't wonder at your being afraid to propose. She is so awfully sharp and clever. She takes the wind out of your sails before you know where you are."

But the young man sat on, absolutely stupefied. What scurvy trick had Fate played him? Marry! It was impossible! And yet, how could he break the news to his uncle? how set himself right in the eyes of this pale, proud girl, who was haughty as any Queen, and had never yet deigned to answer with favour the wooing of any man?

For an instant his heart gave a thrill of triumph, ignoble enough to make him speedily ashamed. But he lacked courage to speak out the honest truth. He wavered now, as he had done in another crisis of his life, and so wavering, he let the moment slip, and saw his uncle set his empty glass down and rise from his seat, while still shame and confusion held him dumb.

"I am going to my study," said Sir Roy. "You will find Alexis in the garden. Tell her to give you some music. She sings better than ever."

But the young man felt bitterly enraged. He could not understand how such a thing had come about. Surely Alexis was jesting! It was on a par with her love of tormenting—the passionless insolence under whose lash he had too often writhed.

"She thinks I am a fool," he said bitterly: "or is it possible that she suspects a rival, and takes this means of assuring herself as to the fact? Well, why should I give her any satisfaction? I am not bound to tell her my private affairs."

He flung himself out of the house, feeling very much aggrieved. "It's a devil of a scrape," he said over and over again, "and how to get out of it I don't know. I suppose I must trust to chance. But I couldn't wrong Gretchen for the world, poor little, trustful darling!"

Then he lit a cigar and strolled away in an opposite direction to that he had seen Alexis take. His thoughts were not with

her, beautiful and fascinating as she was. No, they turned half in regret, half in longing, to a little house—ivy-shaded and rose-entwined, not fifty miles from where he now stood—a little house where a fair, beautiful with love and dawning womanhood, would look out in anxious expectation of his coming. It was very solitary and very lonely; but he had left a good elderly woman-servant in charge of his treasure, and she was so simple of taste and habit that he feared no demon of discontent entering into his Eden. He knew how she would spend her time—studying his language to please him with her proficiency; thinking of him; writing to him; going for solitary rambles in the woods or by the river; living so purely and innocently that it was a reproach to his own selfishness; and ready to adore him afresh the moment he returned to her side.

He paused, and looked up to where the disc of the moon showed pale and bright against the low belt of the far-off woods. He felt a sudden yearning, a longing indescribable for that lovely face, those tender lips. No gesture, no passionate exclamation betrayed his desire; but yet it seemed to fill his whole soul, until he grew sick and faint under its weight. Then a sudden smart as of hot tears came to his eyes, and a pang of self-upbraiding rent his heart.

"Heaven forgive me!" he muttered below his breath; "and keep her from ever guessing the truth!"

The low-breathed words passed like a sigh of the wind, and seemed to recall him to himself. He half started, then turned away, and pulling his hat low down upon his brows, took his way to the woods, whose solitude and silence seemed preferable to his cousin's merciless wit.

Meanwhile Sir Roy sat in his study musing and thoughtful. After some quarter of an hour of consideration he rang the bell, and told the man who answered it to send Bari, Mr. Kenyon's servant, to him.

When the man appeared, Sir Roy took out one or two letters from a drawer in his writing table and laid them before him.

"Well, Bari," he said, "you have kept your word and have won your reward. Here is the sum I promised you;" and he handed him a fifty-pound note. "You are sure," he went on, interrupting the man's thanks, "that your young master is

heart-free, and—the—the little episode has blown over?"

"Quite sure, Sir Roy. As I told you from Venice—it was only a little fancy, an excusable fancy for a pretty little peasant girl. Nothing to alarm you."

"Still," said the Baronet, "I hope he behaved as—as a gentleman. What became of the girl?"

A little, odd smile hovered over the thin lips of the Italian.

"She received enough to make her more than content, Milord," he said, meaningly.

"I should not like any harm to happen to her, you know," persisted Sir Roy. "These little entanglements sometimes have tragic issues."

"Milord need fear no issue that would alarm him. Still, if I might venture to suggest, with all respect, the marriage with Milord's daughter might be reasonably arranged now. A young man after such an affair is better for having his future settled."

"It is settled," said Sir Roy gleefully. "They are engaged, and will be married before the year is out, I hope."

The man's face was too well trained to betray the surprise he felt. It remained impassive as ever as he said:

"I am glad to hear it, Milord. I—I trust I have performed my duty satisfactorily."

"Quite so—quite so," said Sir Roy. "Of course I have said nothing to my nephew about the—young person. These matters are best ignored. We were all young once. It doesn't do to be hard on little follies. Still, not a word must reach my daughter's ears."

"Milord may rely on my discretion," murmured Bari respectfully, as he bowed himself out.

When he had closed the door behind him, a change almost satanic came over his dark, placid face.

"You have done well, my friend," he said, apostrophising himself with self-gratulation. "The old man pays for your confidence, the young for your secrecy. When the marriage is accomplished there will be still more to get, for fear Madame might hear a little secret that would disturb the matrimonial calm. Ha! ha! but they are fools, these English! They can't see one square inch beyond the noses of their faces."

With which vulgar, if somewhat accurate observation, he took himself off to his own

quarters to smoke cigarettes in solitary content, and build up further schemes for his own future benefit.

Meanwhile Alexis Kenyon had been sauntering through the rose garden, where those loveliest of all flowers were showing themselves in all their glory amongst the fresh green leaves.

It was a warm and lovely night. The sky was softly blue, the white lustre of the moon fell upon the gardens, the terraces, the deep belt of woods, and the grand old Abbey itself.

Her eyes grew wistful and soft as she looked at it all—there, in the solitude and fragrance of the famous rose aisles.

"It is about the only place I really do care for," she thought. "I should not like to leave it, or see a stranger reigning here. Why do people make such idiotic laws? As if I could not manage the property as well as any man!" She sighed a little, and moved away down the trellised walk.

"I suppose my father is right. I must marry some day—most of the girls who were 'out' with me have married long ago. There is certainly nothing that could tempt me that has not been offered, and all has failed, up to now. I have no illusions—I certainly have no sentiment. There will be no chance of either fidelity or faithlessness affecting my heart too deeply for its own comfort. I wish, sometimes, that I could commit the folly of 'falling in love,' but I never shall do that now. I am too old for one thing, and too cold-hearted for another. Nature must have left something out when she made me. It looks such folly—it has always looked such folly—that caring for another life till all one's weal and woe go with it, bound like warp and woof in one fabric of entirety. Still, I know my 'première jeunesse' has past, and the preface of life is over. If I married now, I should lose none of my power, and gain the additional charm of 'unattainability.' As for happiness, it is only a word whose individual meaning we interpret according to our fancy. I don't know that it affects the intellect as well as the senses. I should imagine not!"

She had wandered on heedlessly, and now found herself far beyond the boundary of the rose garden, and close to a small iron gate which gave access to a little wood of dwarf firs. She tried the gate; it was unlocked, and yielded at once.

"I have never been here that I can remember," she thought in some sur-

prise, and moved by a faint curiosity she entered, and took a footpath through the trees—a mere track made by the gardeners, which led again to a wild and almost uncultivated tract of ground, all shadowy and dark beneath the drooping branches of many old and thick-leaved trees, which skirted it in on every side.

She went straight on through the dusky gloom that was penetrated here and there by gleams of moonlight, impelled merely by a spirit of curiosity, and a certain restlessness born of the new current of thought her father's words had set in motion that day.

Suddenly she heard voices. She paused, looking through the belt of shadow and moonlight with a faint curiosity as to the speakers. Then one voice, slightly raised in surprise—and almost, she thought, in anger—struck familiarly on her ear.

It was the voice of Neale Kenyon.

Half unconsciously she advanced; some half dozen steps brought her to where her cousin stood. He was leaning against a tree, and smoking. Before him stood a man—a stranger to her—a man neither young nor old, neither good-looking nor ugly, yet a man with a nameless something about face and figure that arrested her attention immediately.

He was speaking now; his voice was low and deep, and full of music, a voice that was a power in itself, and held all the eloquence and magic of oratory even in its simplest expressions.

She did not heed what he was saying. The sentence indeed ended in an abrupt pause, for the rustle of her dress caught the speaker's ear, and he lifted his head and looked full at her. Neale Kenyon turned hastily, and saw her also.

With an effort he cleared his voice, and tried to speak unconcernedly. "Alexis—you here! How in the world did you find your way to such a wilderness?"

She came forward then with her usual indolent grace—her face faintly flushed with exercise.

The stranger involuntarily stepped back a pace or two, and raised his hat. She looked enquiringly at Kenyon. "A friend of yours?" she asked.

The colour involuntarily deserted his face and lips.

"A—a travelling acquaintance. We—we met abroad," he stammered disconcertedly. "The Rev. Adrian Lyie—my cousin, Miss Kenyon!"

THE FOLK-LORE OF MARRIAGE

IN FOUR PARTS. PART II.

AN English wedding in the time of good Queen Bess was a joyous public festival. Among the higher ranks the bridegroom presented the company with scarves, gloves, and garters of the favourite colours of the wedding pair; and the ceremony wound up with banquetings, masques, pageants, and epithalamiums. A gay procession formed a part of the humbler marriages. The bride was led to church between two boys, wearing bride laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves, and before her was carried a silver cup filled with wine, in which was a large branch of gilded rosemary, hung about with silken ribbons of all colours. Next came the musicians, and then the bride's-maids, some bearing great bridecakes, others garlands of gilded wheat. Thus they marched to church amidst the shouts and benedictions of the spectators.

In rural parts of Northumberland it is the custom to place a stool at the church door during the progress of the marriage service, over which the newly-married couple must jump as they leave the sacred edifice. They are allowed, however, to walk out on payment of a small forfeit, which is spent in drink.

The marriage of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, which took place on the twenty-seventh January, 1235, with the Princess Eleanor, widow of William, Earl of Pembroke, was strongly opposed by her brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, upon the ground that on the death of her husband, the Earl of Pembroke, she had in her widowhood made a vow of chastity in the presence of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, and several of the nobility. So strong was this feeling, that De Montfort, fearing lest his enemies should endeavour to procure the annulment of the marriage, went to Rome. The King furnished him with letters to the Pope and Cardinals, dated Tewkesbury, twenty-seventh March, 1238. These letters were strengthened by the Emperor's interest, which he had secured on his way to Rome, as also by a well-timed distribution of money at the Papal Court, and eventually gained the point he sought. That no success was to be expected without large bribes, gave rise to a satirical poem, in which it was intimated that the word "papa" signified "pay, pay."

Jactitation of marriage is a term sometimes made use of, but about the meaning of which a great deal of ignorance prevails. It is one of the principal matrimonial causes, where one of the parties boasts or gives out that he or she is married to the other, whereby a common reputation of their matrimony may ensue. On this ground the party injured may libel the other in the Spiritual Court, and unless the defendant undertakes and makes out a proof of the actual marriage, he or she is enjoined perpetual silence on that head, which is the only remedy the Ecclesiastical Courts can give for this injury. The word "jactitation" literally means seeking ease from an evil.

Amongst the Bretons the marriage customs are very similar to those described as pertaining to the Welsh, with this exception, that they are still kept up in all their primitive simplicity. As amongst the Welsh, a "bidder" goes round before the wedding soliciting presents.

On the wedding-day—invariably Tuesday—at an early hour, the young men of the village and neighbourhood assemble near to the residence of the bridegroom, where the bridegroom meets them. As soon as the number is sufficiently imposing, a procession is formed and starts off for the residence of the bride, preceded by the basvalan, or ambassador of love, and a band of music, in which the bagpipe predominates.

On arriving at their destination it is found that all the doors are closed, but, in response to the authoritative knock of the basvalan, the front door is opened and the brotaër, or envoy of the bride's family, steps over the threshold with a branch of broom in his hand. A colloquy in verse then ensues between the basvalan—who says he has come for the brightest jewel of the house—and the brotaër, which results in the latter returning to the house and producing an aged matron, whom he declares to be the only jewel they possess. The other declares that he has not come for her, and, in succession are brought an infant in arms, a widow, a married woman, and the bride's-maid are produced; and the same answer given in each case—that this is not the jewel he seeks. At length, the bride herself is produced, blooming and blushing, decked out in her bridal attire. The whole of the bridegroom's party then enter the house, and the brotaër having offered up a Pater for the living and a De Profundis for the dead, demands the blessing of the

family upon the head of the young maiden.

After some minor ceremonies, the mother goes up to the maiden as they approach the church and severs the bridal sash, saying, "the tie which has so long united us, my child, is henceforward rent asunder, and I am compelled to yield to another the authority which God gave over to me. If thou art happy—and may God ever grant it!—this will be no longer thy home; but should misfortune visit thee, thy mother is still a mother, and her arms ever open for her children. Like thee, I quitted my mother's side to follow a husband. Thy children will leave thee in their turn. When the birds are grown, the maternal nest cannot hold them. May God bless thee, my child, and grant thee as much consolation as He has granted me!" After this, disturbed only by mendicants, who demand alms, which are freely given, the party proceeds to the sacred edifice. After the celebration of the wedding, feasting is the order of the day, and night, too, for that matter.

For three days the festivities are kept up, after which the bride bids farewell to her friends and companions, and settles down to the care of her household, which henceforward is to be her only delight.

A curious custom used to prevail in Venice in regard to marriage. The great festivals of the year for centuries were known as the "Marian." These had always been events of the greatest popular interest and importance, and served to perpetuate the memory of some triumph of the Venetian Army. Early in the tenth century, it became customary on the recurring Marian anniversary or festival, to select from the different parishes of Venice twelve poor maidens, distinguished for virtue, and modesty, and beauty, who were provided with a dowry at the cost of the State, and fitted out with wedding trousseaus from the treasury of St. Mark. The girls were dressed in long robes of white, with loosened hair, interwoven with threads of gold, and in a rich barge were carried to the Church of St. Peter, followed by a cortège of gaily decorated gondolas, with music and singing; the Doge and Signory accompanying the procession. Each maiden bore in her hand a small box containing her dowry, and met her appointed husband in the church. Mass was celebrated, and the Bishop officiated in the marriage ceremonies. This was the beginning of the Marian festivities, which

lasted for a whole week. The custom fell into abeyance during the Genoese war and was never again revived. It is recorded that on one occasion the Trieste pirates, who had long watched an opportunity to rob the festal barge of its treasures, both human and monetary, broke open the doors of the church one fine morning of Saint Mary's Eve, surprised the congregation, and made good their escape with the brides and the treasure. The Doge, who was present, urged immediate pursuit; every boat capable of carrying rowers was manned and put to sea in the greatest haste. Venice rose as one man to join the pursuit of the pirates, and to assist in the recovery of the brides. The enthusiasm of the Venetians was so irresistible that the pirates were overtaken and beaten in one of the entrances to the lagoons; not a pirate escaped, such was the fury of the pursuers. The brides were recovered entirely unharmed, and the ceremony of marriage took place with increased pomp the same evening.

At one time the Swedish marriage customs were of a most barbaric nature. It was considered beneath the dignity of a warrior to secure a lady's favour by gallantry and submission; it was enough that she had bestowed her affections on another, and was on her way to the marriage ceremony. The warrior would then call his retainers, and fall upon the wedding party, forcibly carrying off the bride—if he were strong enough; if not, he had to retire. Greater facility was given to this practice from the custom of having marriages at night. Three or four days before the marriage the ceremony of the bride's bath took place, when the lady went in great state to perform her ablutions, accompanied by all her friends, married and single. Afterwards a banquet and ball were given. On the marriage day the young couple sat on a raised platform, under a canopy of silk, all the wedding presents, consisting of plate, jewels, and money, being arranged on a bench covered with silk. It is still customary to fill the bride's pocket with bread, which she gives to the poor on her road to church, a misfortune being averted with every alms bestowed. At the same time, lest he should bring misfortune on himself, the beggar does not eat the bread. On the return of the bride and bridegroom from church, they must visit their cow-houses and stables, that the cattle may thrive and multiply.

In Norway, as soon as a young man and young woman are engaged, no matter in what rank of life, betrothed rings are exchanged and worn ever afterwards by men as well as women. The consequence is, that one can always tell an engaged person in the same way as a married woman in England can be recognised. Gold rings are used by the rich, but silver, solid or in filigree, by the poor. There is not a married man in Norway, no matter how humble he may be, who does not wear this outward mark of submission to the matrimonial yoke. But this is not all—as soon as a man is engaged he has "calling cards" printed, with the name of his fiancée immediately below his own.

In France, a girl who remains single up to the age of twenty-five years may be looked upon almost as an anomaly; even the least attractive regard their establishment in life, not merely as a probable eventuality, but as a matter of course. When scarcely in her teens her future prospects have been already discussed, and her "expectations" accurately calculated by that mysterious and influential *Vehmergericht*, the family council. Suggestions from its different members as to the corresponding advantages she is entitled to demand have been carefully listened to and considered, and the names of such of their friends and acquaintances as may ultimately supply the requisite son-in-law duly registered. When the time for action arrives, negotiations are opened on all sides, not merely by the mother and other female relatives, but also by whatever sympathising *commère*—and these are legion—they can contrive to enlist in their behalf.

Thanks to their united efforts, the young lady, whose consent to their arbitrary disposal of her person is regarded as a foregone conclusion, finds herself in an incredibly short space of time betrothed to a comparative stranger, whom she has perhaps met twice in her life before, and complacently accepting as her legitimate due the traditional bouquet, which, during the weary interval between the signature of the contract and the marriage ceremony, it is his daily privilege to offer her. When once the knot is tied, and the newly-married couple are fairly on their wedding tour, the professional match-maker's occupation is at an end, and she calmly washes her hands as to the result of the "arrangement." Yet, strange though it may seem, such marriages usually turn out remarkably

well, and even in cases where a complete accordance of tastes and dispositions is wanting, both parties are, as a rule, disposed to make the best of an indifferent bargain.

German gentlemen, as a rule, I find, do not care much for beauty in their wives, unless accompanied by some more enduring qualities that shall fit them to be help-meets indeed. The very greatest caution is displayed by the Teuton in choosing a partner for life. Before committing himself too far with a young lady, the gentleman will first ask her father's consent to visit at his house, that he may judge from the young lady's conduct towards her parents, and brothers, and sisters, and servants, if she will make him a good wife. He must also see that she is capable of cooking, ironing, dressmaking, and other little accomplishments. Should she come through the ordeal unscathed the pair engage themselves by exchanging rings, and the bride at once begins to make her wedding trousseau—no trifling affair, as it is incumbent upon her to provide not only her own wardrobe, but all the household linen, furniture, and kitchen utensils. The marriage is an occasion for great rejoicings, and extends over several days, during which much tobacco is smoked by the males, and much chatter indulged in by the females, between the hours of feasting.

Solid though they be, all German husbands do not appear to be great successes, yet the wives are evidently sweet, forbearing creatures, as the following verses from the German will show :

Oh, I have a man as good as can be,
No woman could wish for a better than he ;
Sometimes, indeed, he may chance to do wrong,
But his love for me is uncommonly strong.

When soaked with rum he is hardly polite,
But knocks the crockery left and right ;
And pulls my hair, and growls again ;
But, excepting that, he's the best of men.

All I can say is, if the foregoing represents the average of German women, they are easily satisfied. What a treasure such a wife would prove, what an inestimable boon, to a Lancashire miner, or to a Yorkshire cotton-spinner !

Among the Huzaias, a people of Asia, the suitors for the hand of a maiden assemble together unarmed on a given day, mounted on the best horses that can be procured, while the bride herself, mounted on a beautiful Turcoman horse, surrounded by her relatives, anxiously

scans the group of lovers. She notices the dress and appearance of the favoured one before receiving the order to start. On the receipt of this order she rides off across the savannah, which is generally twelve miles or so long by several miles broad. When she has put a sufficient distance between herself and the others, she waves her arm and the chase commences. Whichever of the suitors first gets up to her and encircles her waist is entitled to claim her as his wife, whether agreeable or disagreeable to the girl. As the horsemen speed across the plain, it is easy to discover who is the favoured one by the efforts made by the girl to avoid all others. Invariably the one to succeed is the one desired by the fair equestrian.

In India, in spite of the well-meant efforts of the Indian Marriage Reform Association, matrimony still remains a very costly business. It is not merely that expensive presents are bestowed, as with us, on the bride and bridegroom, or that the parents of the bride are often impoverished for life by the dowry they have to give her. When a great wedding takes place, troops of hungry mendicants and needy priests appear on the scene, and it would be contrary to good manners to send them away empty-handed.

At the recent marriage of a wealthy Zemindar at Rungpore, ten thousand people were sumptuously fed and presented with clothing and money. The lame and blind came in for even more generous treatment, while the learned Brahmins who honoured the ceremony with their presence were handsomely recompensed, each according to his talents. The bride's father also liberated all the small debtors from the Rungpore Gaol by paying off their creditors ; and he presented a handsome shawl to every member of the circus company which had been hired for the occasion. His total expenditure, apart from dowry and bridal outfit, is said to have amounted to fifteen thousand pounds—a heavy sum for a Zemindar, however wealthy, to give away at the marriage of one daughter. Such expenditure as this is neither more nor less than a shameful waste of money, and I hope the Marriage Reform Association may be successful in their efforts.

The most lamentable thing of all in the domestic arrangements of the unhappy races in the East, is the early age at which the girls are married. The "Journale," an Arabic journal, once made a boast of having

seen a grandmother of twenty years, herself having been married before she was ten. Dr. Meahakah, of Damascus, a venerable, white-headed patriarch, with his little wife, whom he had married at ten years of age, remarked that in his days young girls received no training at home; young men who wanted wives to please them, had to marry them early so as to educate them to suit themselves. One of the scholars in the Beyrout Seminary came in at eight years of age, and remained for two years. At ten her parents sent for her and took her away to be married. One of the teachers records in a very artless manner what carefulness they had in getting her off and sending her dolls with her.

Amongst the Persians, the *akd*, or marriage contract, is simply a legal form; "but it is a marriage, and not a betrothal," says a newspaper correspondent. A few friends are invited; the bride—perhaps a child of ten—is seated in a room with her parents and relatives. Over the door hangs the usual curtain; or, if the ceremony takes place in one room or the open air, the women are all veiled. At the other side of the curtain, in an outer room, or in the open air, are the male guests, and here squats the Mollah, or priest of the quarter, who now draws out in a monotonous voice the marriage contract, which has been previously drawn out by him: "It is agreed between Hassan, the draper, who is agent for Houssein, the son of the baker, that he (Houssein) hereby acknowledges the receipt of the portion of Nissa, the daughter of Achmet, the grocer." Here follows a list of the property of the bride in money and kind, including a copy of the Koran, which on death or divorce reverts back to her or her heirs. The receipt having been acknowledged, the Vakeel, or deputy for the bridegroom, and the mother for the bride, agree to the wedding, and the Mollah solemnly declares that "In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful, and of Mohammed the Prophet of God, I declare you, Lord Houssein, and you Lady Nissa, to be man and wife." The document containing a list of the bride's properties is stamped and signed, the Mollah receives his fee, and all is over. There is no other ceremony, and the pair are bound together as tightly as the Mohammedan law can bind them.

In Egypt and Turkey love rarely, if ever, enters into the marriage contract; most

frequently the wife is bought and sold like so much merchandise, and her home life is about as wretched as it well can be.

The first wife of a Turk (he is allowed four by the Koran), is called the "*hauune*," and takes precedence over the others all her life. She has a right to all the best rooms and to a fixed share of her husband's income, which he must not reduce to minister to the caprices of his younger spouses. She visits and entertains other "*hauunes*," but keeps aloof from wives of the second and third degree. She goes out when she pleases, and if her husband meets her in the street he will make no sign of recognition. If he perceives her halting before a draper's stall, and gazing at silks dearer than he can afford, he must possess his soul in resignation, muttering "*mash allah*." Turkish girls and women are unaffectedly modest, and, looking upon marriage as their natural destiny, are careful of their reputations, and when married make first-rate housewives.

As soon as a Viennese girl is born, the weaving of her linen is begun, each year a certain number of yards being set aside for the trousseau when her marriage shall take place. This includes twelve dozen pairs of stockings, usually knitted by the elders of the family. After they leave school, usually at the age of fifteen years, they go through one or two years' teaching in the pantry and kitchen, either under the instruction of a member of the family or a trained cook. Thus, though it may never be their lot to have to cook a dinner, they are rendered independent of servants. When married they make excellent wives and mothers; indeed, an Austrian lady is as accomplished as a first-class English governess, as good a cook and housekeeper as a German, as vivacious as a Frenchwoman, as passionate as an Italian, and as beautiful as—a woman. An Austrian lady is rarely seen without some description of work in her hand, either in or out of society, and when several work together in one household, one reads while the others work.

They never have any breach of promise cases in China. A future Chinese belle is not three days old before her parents have betrothed her to some acceptable scion of a neighbour's house. When she is old enough—and she does not have to be very old; if she were in England she would be still playing with her doll—she goes to the house of her affianced and marries him. She weeps and wails all the way there, as

if her idea of matrimony were not exactly a cheerful one. There is always mourning at a Chinese marriage, while at a Chinese funeral there is always a band of music and rejoicing.

In the Abbé Huc's "Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China," the following ceremony is recorded as being practised amongst the Tartars. The day indicated by the lamas (priests) as auspicious for the marriage having arrived, the bridegroom sends early in the morning a deputation to fetch the girl who has been betrothed to him, or rather, whom he has bought. When the envoy draws near, the relations and friends of the bride place themselves in a circle before the door, as if to oppose the departure of the bride; and then begins a feigned fight, which of course terminates with the bride being carried off. She is placed on a horse, and, having been thrice led round her paternal home, she is then taken at full gallop to the tent which has been prepared for the purpose, near the dwelling of her father-in-law.

Meantime, all the Tartars of the neighbourhood, the relations and friends of both families, repair to the wedding feast, and offer their presents to the newly-married pair. The extent of these presents, which consist of beasts and eatables, is left to the generosity of the guests. They are destined for the father of the bridegroom, and often fully indemnify him for his expenses in the purchase of the bride. As the offered animals come up, they are taken into folds ready prepared for them. At the weddings of rich Tartars, these large folds receive great herds of oxen, horses, and sheep. Generally the guests are generous enough, for they know that they will be paid in return on a similar occasion.

In Russia the pair about to be betrothed kneel down upon a great fur mat, and the bride takes a ring from her finger and gives it to the bridegroom, who returns the gift by another. The bride's mother meanwhile crumbles a piece of bread over her daughter's head, and her father holds the image of his daughter's patron saint over the future son-in-law's well-brushed locks. As they arise, bride's-maids sing a wedding song. The guests each bring forth a present of some sort, wine is handed about, and someone says it is bitter and needs sweetening; upon this the bridegroom kisses the bride—the sweetness being supposed to be imparted to the wine by this act of osculation—salutes the

company, and takes his leave, on which the bride's-maids sing a song with a chorus something like this—

Farewell, happy bridegroom!
But return to be still more happy!

The couple may now court to their heart's content until the time for the wedding proper arrives. At each visit during this intermediate state the young man must bring a present to the lady, and—which would appear rather embarrassing to English lovers—must do all his spooning in the presence of the lady's friends, who sit in a circle and sing songs descriptive of the happiness in store for the betrothed pair. On the last night of the courtship the bridegroom makes innumerable gifts to the bride. These must include brushes, combs, soap, and perfumery, on the receipt of which the bride is carried away to be washed and dressed by the bridesmaids. Having successfully performed this duty the bride is conducted back to the bridegroom, with her dowry tied up in a bag. This she hands to him, and shortly afterwards he takes his leave. On the next morning they are married according to the rites of the Greek Church. The wedding feast, which follows, lasts over a week, at the expiration of which period the couple are left for the first time to their own resources. At the wedding banquet the same ceremony with regard to the sourness of the wine, and the kiss which imparts sweetness to it, is gone through as at the betrothal, with the exception that it is necessary to exchange three kisses before the wine is fit to drink.

FIRE!

THERE is nothing more terrible than an alarm of fire, rising in the stillness of the night, and confronting bewildered people who have been sleeping peacefully in their beds with the cruellest of all dangers. And even when life is not at stake, how grievous it is to witness the results of human labour, the toil and pains of human life, vanishing to smoke and dust in one huge, cruel flare; all lost without the least morsel of compensation. And thus the process of "fighting fire" excites everybody's warmest sympathies. The heroes of the contest are our Fire Brigade men, and the thunder of their engines as they gallop through the streets excites the mind like the roll of artillery hastening to some great battle.

The enemy, it may be said, is constantly increasing in strength. Great stores of combustible matters accumulate in every large city; increased luxury in the way of warmth and light increases the chances of fire; while the enormous size of modern buildings, such as clubs, hotels, asylums, prisons, causes extreme peril to human life in the event of such disaster.

The campaign against fire is marked with many victories; but these make little noise. Nothing can be tamer than a fire extinguished in its birth. Yet, sometimes there is defeat—a city is burnt down, an extensive quarter laid waste, or a great public monument disappears, and then we recognise that we have no certain mastery over the insidious enemy. And those best acquainted with the subject tell us gravely that fire disaster is only a “question of time and the coincidence of certain conditions happily not often in association.” In our own London, for instance, the Brigade is fully adequate for ordinary conditions. The fighting line is excellent, and holds the enemy well in check; but, should the latter prevail at any point, where are the reserves?

Although, in a general way, fires have a small beginning, yet, in great warehouses and depôts where there are vast stores of combustible materials, sometimes a fire springs forth ready armed for destruction. Then everything depends upon the concentration of a sufficient number and force of engines as fairly to beat out the fire—for the force of the jet is as powerful an element as the quantity of water thrown—as well as to deluge neighbouring roofs and buildings and prevent the conflagration from spreading. In such a combat, when the general safety of a whole district is perhaps concerned, the manual engine, so long the type of efficiency, is now superseded by the steam fire-engine. Yet, the manuals still form the chief strength of the London Fire Brigade, which musters some hundred and thirty manuals as against forty-six steamers. The latter number seems very inadequate to the safety of such an enormous city, with its vast store of all kinds of produce.

The ordinary steamers of the London Fire Brigade, taking those recently supplied by Messrs. Merryweather as examples, are handsome and useful engines, rated to throw about three hundred gallons a minute, and will send a jet to the height of a hundred and fifty feet. The fore part

shows the driving-box, and seats for the firemen above the hose-box and tool-chest, while the latter part of the frame-work above the big hind-wheels is occupied by boiler and machinery, with coal bunkers below, and a stand for the engineer who can stoke fires and get up steam as the engine is rattling through the streets. The newly designed boilers for the rapid generation of steam starting with cold water, will raise a pressure of a hundred pounds to the square inch, within six minutes from the time of lighting fires; and when, as is customary in the Brigade stations, a gas jet is kept burning beneath, the same effect is produced in three minutes. Thus whether the fire be far from the station or close by, by the time it is on the spot and the hose coupled up and adjusted, the engine is ready to perform its part of the work.

The accessories of such an engine, all arranged in that extreme neatness and order so indispensable in fire work, are suction-hose and suction-strainers for connection with the water company's mains or other sources of supply; sets of delivery hose, a thousand feet at least in total length; branch pipes; gun-metal nozzles; water-bags for wheels; engine-hose and suction-wrenches; besides all the various tools required for the adjustment of the machinery. Then there are the appliances for drawing the engine through the streets to be thought of—the pole and splinter-bars for the horses which are standing ready harnessed in the stables awaiting the call, which, however, long delayed, is sure to come at last; the four lamps with strong reflectors that cast a warning glow over the track; with poles and ropes for dragging the engine from place to place by hand power, if necessary.

The London steamers are sufficiently powerful for general purposes, but where enormous blocks of buildings are to be protected, an engine of higher power is a requisite. Such is the “John Hughes,” recently made for Liverpool by Merryweather—the most powerful portable engine in the world, it is said—of a hundred-horse power, indicated, and able to throw no less than one thousand three hundred and fifty gallons a minute, while it will send a jet as thick as a man's wrist to a distance of three hundred feet horizontally. A few engines of such a powerful type distributed as a reserve among the chief stations of the London Fire Brigade, might perhaps one day save the metropolis from a serious

calamity. We want an engine that would reach the dome of St. Paul's if that were on fire.

In putting out ordinary fires, however, it is a golden rule to use as little water as possible, for the latter often does more damage than the former. The jet of a powerful engine is as destructive in its way as fire to all perishable articles within a room, such as furniture, pictures, and bric-à-brac. And that brings us to another part of our subject. Fire protection, like charity, should begin at home. However efficient may be the public service against fire, a single bucket of water properly administered may stop a fire that all the efforts of the Brigade would be unable to quench.

So far chemistry has not supplied us with the means of extinguishing a fire on a large scale. But the hand grenades, or chemical bottles, now extensively advertised and sold, may often be serviceable at the first outset, when they can be thrown on the exact focus of the fire. Chemical extinguishers also are supplied by the fire engineers in the form of metal cases with pipes and nozzles, and these are set at work by simply turning them upside down, when, after the fashion of a gasogene, the gas generated forces forth a stream of water which lasts for several minutes, and can be directed upon any burning matter. But for an outbreak fairly alight and in possession, we can only rely upon the primeval antagonism between fire and water. Where the water supply is continuous and under pressure, as in London houses generally, a few lengths of hose of small calibre to connect with the ordinary taps, form a prudent precaution against fire. The only objection to this plan is, that in summer time the temptation is irresistible to water the small garden with the same hose, when the water company probably mulcts you in a contribution for a duodecimo flower bed and lawn the size of a dinner table, at a rate which would be fair enough for a couple of acres.

For large establishments there are the regular hydrants, and these should be supplemented by fire buckets, which should be kept full of water, and used for no other purpose. As the flames from mineral oil are not to be quenched by water, a bucket containing sand or earth should be kept in readiness where such oil is used. Where there is no regular water service, hand pumps, with their accessories of hose, couplings, and nozzle, are likely to be use-

ful. But for a handy pump for villages, country-houses, large farmsteads, and places far removed from regular fire brigades, commend us to one of neatest possible portable engines called the "Valiant"—portable indeed in the strictest sense of the word, for though provided with a wheeled carriage, it can be unshipped at will and carried on the shoulders of four bearers, like a sedan-chair. A wonderful little servant of all work is such an engine, which will deliver seventy gallons of water a minute in case of fire, and is equally handy whether playing upon a burning stack or cottage, drawing the water supply to a country-house, pumping water from the shore to a ship's cisterns, or supplying water from a river or well to a distant camp.

There are many other useful accessories which find a place in the fireman's armoury and tool-box, and which should also have their place in large establishments, where a fire may have to be fought from floor to floor. There are hatchets and fire-axes, crowbars, saws for cutting away floors and roof, ceiling hooks for pricking ceilings and pulling down curtains, hangings, boards, and plaster. More strictly technical appliances are ladder clips, to suspend hose from ladder rounds, banisters, etc., leak clamps to temporarily cover leaky patches in fire-hose. An excellent contrivance of American origin is the spreading nozzle, which on being twisted one way or the other, discharges either a solid jet or showers of spray at the will of the operator; and this, for rooms with fragile and valuable contents where fire may have penetrated but not gained the mastery, is a most excellent alternative.

But in a general way, for people who live in houses great or small, the question is not of fighting fire but of running away from it. The ordinary urban residence, when once alight, rarely leaves much time for the purpose. The staircase is generally the chief seat of the fire. There is generally, in the lower regions, a cupboard under the stairs—a receptacle for firewood, shavings, oil cans, and combustibles in general—which is admirably adapted as a focus for fire, and for cutting off the retreat of the inmates. But in any case a wooden staircase is soon burnt up, nor is a stone stair any very great advantage, as that soon cracks and falls away.

Any one who has tried to light a fire in a grate with all possible advantages must

have found that it cannot be done with a spark or a smouldering bit of candlewick, or other trifle of the kind. People who try to burn their houses have to set about the affair in a much more elaborate way, and then often fail in the attempt. But few things are more dangerous than the plug of tobacco at the bottom of the smoker's pipe, which seems to be extinct, and yet when knocked out presently revives into a furious glow. Faulty construction again is the cause of numerous fires; a joist may abut upon a flue and become calcined, and may remain for years with no damage done, and then set fire to the house. Then there are gas jets within reach of jams or panels; lamps that hang beneath wooden beams and reduce them by gentle degrees to the condition of touch-wood; and many other accidental causes of fire.

But, for those in a house on fire, the most important thing is to get out of it as soon as possible; not to wait even to dress, but, wrapped in blanket or rug, to make sure of a line of retreat. This advice agrees so well with natural instinct that there is no need to insist further upon it. But the cruel predicament is, when the retreat is cut off, and the stairs are no longer in existence. Then all the inmates of the upper floors can do, is to make for the windows in the front of the house in the hope of rescue from below, but with a greater chance of a cruel death unless there has been the merciful provision of a fire escape. At that moment, even a rope of the requisite length may be the means of saving many lives. But women and children, perhaps unnerved and helpless from terror, can hardly attempt gymnastic feats, such as descending a rope from a great height. And in all buildings of many floors inhabited at night, there ought to be the provision in each floor—or at all events at the top-floor—of some kind of fire escape.

There is nothing better in this way than the Chute escape, which is simplicity itself in construction, consisting of a tube of specially prepared canvas of the requisite length with a metal frame-work at the top which can be instantaneously fitted to any window of ordinary size. Down this pipe anyone may slide with perfect safety, extending arms or legs being sufficient to moderate the descent, and when held out at the bottom by the first one who descends, people may be sent down it as quickly as bales of wool down a shoot. An occa-

sional rehearsal of the use of this escape is an excellent piece of fun for everybody, and the whole household will soon gain confidence in it, and even enjoy the rapid flight from sky to earth.

In houses of only moderate height a couple of lengths of ladders may be sufficient provision for safety, and the manufacturer of fire implements has many contrivances of this kind. A very useful kind are adapted to form a pair of steps for general use, while they can be extended and locked in one stretch as a ladder. Then there are escapes which work with hook and pulley; and a length of rope with a hook to it would be an excellent thing to pack in a portmanteau for those who are accustomed to sojourn in the big hotels of the period—for a rope that permits descent from one storey to another might suffice for an active and fearless man.

It is worth bearing in mind, too, that when there is danger of suffocation from smoke, the purest air will be found nearest the floor, and it may be possible to pass on hands and knees when it would be impossible standing up. Also that all doors and windows should be shut if possible, as to increase the supply of air is to feed the vehemence of the flames. Also that in choosing a window for a descent one over a door is preferable to one over an area, on account of the greater depth in the latter case as well as the spiked railings frequently to be met with. It is only to be hoped that none of the readers of this paper may have occasion to carry any of these hints into practice. Still, there is no harm in being prepared.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

ARGYLE.

THE question which suggests itself to the enquirer into the beginnings of Scottish history—where shall we seek the original Scot?—bids fair to find an answer in Argyle. And yet even in Argyle the Scot came as an immigrant. He dropped across in his galley from neighbouring Ulster and took possession of the green shores and pleasant fiords, and charming land-locked lakes, and formed numerous settlements thereabouts, which became the one stable nucleus among the shifting populations that surround it. Nor was this nucleus probably ever a very large one. There

were more Scots left in Ulster, no doubt, than ever crossed the narrow but stormy channel that divides the two countries.

A chief among the Scots of Ulster, Carber Riadha, living in the middle of the third century, according to Irish annals, was the ancestor of an illustrious line of Dalriad chiefs, among whom one Eric, some three centuries afterwards, sent his sons to colonise the adjacent shore. The eldest of these sons, Loarn More, settled in the land that bears his name—that land of Lorne now familiar to thousands of summer visitants. Other sons of Eric established themselves on the same coast. These Dalriad Scots were, no doubt, Gaelic in language and habits, but some subtle difference in race and character gave them an advantage in the struggle for supremacy. They have left no monuments to mark their existence as a separate people, no trace of a language different from the tribes about them—and yet, in a way, the whole country is their monument, and the land that bears their name owes its distinctive character to the influence they transmitted through a long series of generations. A comely and physically powerful race, their chiefs found favour with the dark-eyed daughters both of Gael and Cymro, and more by peaceful alliance than conquest they spread their influence from sea to sea. Religion came to their aid, or rather they knew how to enlist its services by their policy. The holy island of the Gael was occupied by Columba and his Irish mission; the Kings of Dalriada were consecrated at Iona; and the holy Columba himself was constrained by a vision to anoint one Aidan to the royal office. Columba would have preferred another brother, Iogen, but was so severely buffeted by the angel of his vision, that he was compelled to give way.

In consecrating Aidan, the saint is recorded to have uttered a remarkable prediction or threat. The King and his race, he said, should be invincible upon the throne until they did injustice to the saint and his race—the Irish race from which he sprang. This prophecy was supposed to have been fulfilled when in 639 Donald Bree invaded Ireland, and was defeated and slain at Magh Rath, now Moyra, in County Down, Ireland. Others have considered that the throne was never really lost to the descendants of Eric till Charles the First was deposed, an event which might be directly traced to his unjust treatment of the Irish people.

In the movements of Gaelic tribes and the incursions of the Danes or other Norsemen, the traces of the early Scottish Kingdom have been lost; but it seems probable that the Campbell clan long continued to represent, and to some extent still represents, this ancient race of Scots. For they were never quite like other Highlanders, and their chiefs have always followed a different and more subtle policy. In a great measure the history of the Campbells is the history of the County of Argyle, and curiosity is excited as to the origin of a race whose very name is un-Gaelic and alien.

At a period when descent from some obscure Norman adventurer was more highly prized than the most illustrious blood of chieftains of a noble race, family genealogists derived the Campbell stock from some Gillespie Campobello, who married the heiress of the house of Diarmid. But as times and opinions change, so vary the pedigrees of the great; and the following extract from a recent work seems to embody the latest views on the matter.

"Eva-na-Duibhn being under age, her uncle, Arthur Cruachan, became her tutor and guardian. To prevent her possessions going to another clan, she resolved to marry none but one of her own race; and it so happened that her cousin, Gillespie, son to Malcolm MacDuibhn, who had married the heiress of Cambusbellus, in Normandy, arrived on a visit to friends in Scotland, being an officer in William the Conqueror's army. Him she married."

All this account has a very modern aspect, and, with its young heiress and the cousin "in the army," might figure in a conventional novel of the period. Still, the name seems to be of Norman origin, and, if so, was probably derived from the hamlet of La Cambe, on the road between Isgny and Bayeux, in a fertile dairyland, whose fertility may have led to the designation of la Cambe-belle.

It is only fair, however, to give the Scottish poet's account of the matter:

Scarce their wide away the heathy mountains bound,
Where Campbells, sprung of old O'Dubin's race,
Old as their hills, still rule their native place.
No ancient chief could like O'Dubin wield
The weighty war, or range th' embattled field;
Hence the admiring Gaul, preserved in fight
From furious Normans by the hero's might,
Him Campbell called: and no heroic name
Is further heard, or better known to fame.

The probabilities of the case are that the Campbells are the true sons of Duin, of the race of Diarmid. and that they assumed

their present name as a matter of policy, even before the days of Bruce, when Norman names were in fashion, and the native chiefs were suspected and discredited at the Scottish Court. They still bear the cognizance of the great chieftain, the memory of whose exploits lingers in song and tradition.

Let the sons of brown Diarmid who slew the wild boar.

Resume the pure faith of the great Callum More.

The boar's head thus borne by the Campbells is something more than a crest. It is the Totem, or emblem, of the tribe, and carries us back to days when heraldry had not come into existence.

The lands between Loch Awe and Loch Fyne seem to have been the original seat of the Campbells, whose chiefs gradually extended their sway—more, as we have said, by policy and alliance than by fighting, although they never hesitated at bloodshed when it served their purpose—over the greater part of the rugged coast of Argyle. The land of Lorne was acquired by the marriage of the first Earl of Argyle with Lady Isabel Stewart of Lorne, when the galley in full sail first appears in the family arms, once the cognizance of earlier Lords of the Isles and of Lorne—

The heirs of mighty Somerled.

In quite a different way was Kintyre won. That far-stretching promontory, for the most part level and fertile, was originally the land of the MacDonalds, with whom the Campbells were incessantly at war. The latter generally contrived to have law and the Royal authority upon their side. Kintyre possesses a splendid harbour, probably the first landing-place of the Dalriad Scots, which long bore the name of Dalruadhain, now Campbeltown, and hence the peninsula became a suitable Royal post for operating against the uncomfortable islanders of the West. James the Fourth held a kind of parliament in Kintyre, and formally released all the vassals of the Lord of the Isles from their allegiance. His successor made an expedition against the MacDonalds, and built and garrisoned the Castle of Kilkerran to overawe the restless clansmen. The MacDonalds, however, declined to be overawed, and attacked and destroyed both castle and garrison.

Then the Campbells got a grant of Kintyre from the Crown, and drove Angus, the chief of the MacDonalds, from his castle of Dunaverty, and cleared the peninsula of the Clansmen. Angus took

refuge in Ireland, and Kintyre remained for several generations in the hands of the Campbells. But a descendant of the Macdonald, a noted partisan leader, known as Coll Kittoch, laid claim to the lands of Kintyre, and as the Campbells sided with the Covenant, Coll declared for the King. Coll's son, Alexander, was serving under Montrose as Major-General, and thus the great battle of Inverlochy—great, considered as a Highland battle, that is—when Argyle was humbled to the dust, was a great victory for the Macdonalds as well as for the Royal cause. Then Coll triumphantly took possession of Kintyre, but his triumph was of short duration, for Montrose was soon after defeated at Philiphaugh, and the Royal cause was lost.

After Philiphaugh, only Huntly in the north, and Alexander Macdonald and his father Coll in Kintyre, remained in arms against the Covenanting Army. David Leslie himself marched against Kintyre, and Coll took refuge in Islay, while Sir Alexander returned to Ireland. But they left a strong garrison in Dunaverty—three hundred men commanded by Archie Macdonald and Archie Og, his son. The garrison made a stout defence; but the besiegers soon discovered the source of their water supply, brought from a neighbouring spring by iron pipes, for there was no well in the castle, and cut it off. Then driven to despair by the torments of thirst in the heat of the July sunshine, the garrison surrendered, and were destroyed in the cruel spirit of the age. Only a woman escaped, Flora, the nurse of the infant son of Archie Og, with the babe under her charge, who hid herself in a cavern in the Moil. The child grew up, and eventually recovered the heritage of his fathers.

But the main stem of the Macdonalds was soon to be cut off. The Covenanters followed Coll to Islay, and, storming the Castle of Dunniveg, took Coll a prisoner and brought him to Dunstaffnage, where he was hanged from the battlement of the Castle, among his hereditary foes, the Campbells. Sir Alexander was soon after slain in Ireland, and there no longer remained any claimants to dispute possession of Kintyre.

But during these struggles, the country had been devastated and almost depopulated. Tradition records how a solitary cow came forth, with people who had hidden among rocks and caves, a cow that bellowed mournfully the coronach of all

the herds and flocks that had once pastured in Kintyre. But the Earl of Argyle presently re-peopled the country with settlers from the Lowlands, peaceable folk who knew how to farm to the best advantage, and could be relied upon to meet the factor upon rent day.

There is no more charming retreat anywhere than Loch Awe, hemmed in and sheltered by ranges of huge hills on the north and east, and yet open to the sunshine and balmy western breeze, with rich and pleasant glens and valleys. The passes over the mountains were so wild and difficult that the Lord of Loch Awe could afford to laugh at the threats of invasion, for only an army of mountaineers like that led by Montrose could possibly penetrate, and that only by something like miraculous daring and energy, to the long inviolate threshold. And yet the land produced everything that was needed for ease and comfort; milk and honey; corn; and if not wine, that usquebaugh, which is more suited to the palate of a mountaineer; fruits of all kinds; and flowers such as grow freely only in favoured lands. The original disadvantage of Loch Awe was that its blessings were shared among a good many. Different clans disputed each corner of Loch Awe, and its four-and-twenty islands afforded safe and secure sites for almost as many castles of the neighbouring chiefs.

There was Fraocheillein Castle, once the chief seat of the MacNaughtons, on an island which old tradition connected with a legend like that of the Hesperides. There was a buried treasure or talisman, and a monster dragon that guarded it. But if there was a treasure or talisman the Campbells have got it since long ago, and the dragon has fled, and the MacNaughtons have gone too. Then there are Fionchairn, with Innis Erreth, Innis Coulin, Innishail; and Innisconnel, with some fine ruins of a castle, the original stronghold of the Lords of Loch Awe. On a promontory beautifully placed above the lake are the ruined turrets and gables of Caolchurn, that commands the noble Glenorchy, once the heritage of the MacGregor, but for long—since the reign of James the Second, or Third, that is—the chief seat of the Campbells of Glenorchy, afterwards Lords Breadalbane. Who could gain the mastery in Loch Awe would presently own all of the western shore that was worth having, and the Campbells, gifted with prudence, sagacity, and determination, were soon rid of all rival clans.

The character given of the first Lord Breadalbane seems by general consent to have been typical of his race at that period—"cunning as a fox, wise as a serpent, and slippery as an eel."

The race that before the Campbells came to the front had taken the lead in the western land is not extinct. The MacDougall of Donolly Castle, near the rising town of Oban, aptly called the Charing Cross of the Highlands, is the lineal descendant of the ancient Lords of Lorne, and one of the heirs of mighty Somerled, while he occupies the original seat of his far-away ancestor, Dougal, the son of Somerled.

As to Somerled himself, the great hero of the west, there is some doubt as to his origin. Tradition reports him as first found with his father living the lives of anchorites in a lonely cave on Loch Linnhe, refugees, perhaps, of a mighty race. As to his death, we have it recorded in black and white: "Sumerledus Regulus Argatheliæ—Sumerled, Thane of Argyle, slain at Renfrew, A.D. 1164." But of what happened between, and how the homeless waif raised himself to such dignity, we have only traditional accounts. He is said to have distinguished himself as the scourge of the Northmen, and to have gathered the Gaelic tribes and led them to victory against the invader.

Somerled had two sons: Reginald, who took the Lordship of the Isles, and Dugal, who was Lord of Lorne and the ancestor of the MacDougals. Reginald brought Cistercian monks to Kintyre, to the land of St. Ciran, who, five hundred years before, had lived the life of sanctity in a lonely cave by the sea-shore; and Reginald built for his guests the Monastery of Saddell, whose ruins are still to be found in a sweet, shaded spot on the peninsula of Kintyre. In Bruce's wars, as everybody knows who has read Scott's "Lord of the Isles," the two branches of the House of Somerled took different sides. John of Lorne was inveterate against the man who had assassinated his kinsman, Red Comyn, while the Lord of the Isles in the event espoused the side of Robert Bruce. At Bannockburn the men of the Isles were as thickly mustered as the Lowland contingent:

With these the valiant of the Isles
Beneath their chieftains ranked their files,
In many a plaided band.

And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
A galley driven by sail and oar.

Actually the commander of the Islesmen on that day was Angus Og, a young scion of the house, who was largely endowed with lands and royalties for his share in winning the great victory.

Occupying a commanding position on the frontier of the land of Lorne, and pleasantly placed between sea-shore and loch, stands Dunstaffnage Castle, which, if tradition may be believed, was once the Royal seat of the monarchy of Scotland. Here was kept the Coronation Stone, which was subsequently transferred to Scone, and which now reposes beneath the seat of the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. The guardian of the castle even points out the exact spot where the stone was kept, but the existing walls are hardly of such high antiquity as to warrant the belief. The stone, according to credible tradition, was originally brought from Iona, one of the fetish stones, the object of the superstitious reverence of the Gaels, long before the introduction of Christianity; and when Columba consecrated the Dalriad chief as King, it was probably on this stone that the monarch stood or sat. Thus, when the Dalriad chiefs extended their influence eastwards, the sacred stone travelled with them, and found a new resting-place at Scone.

Beyond Dunstaffnage, on the other side of the Loch Etive, lies the pastoral land of Appin, which from its name seems once to have been Abbot's land, under the peaceful rule of some religious house; and higher up the country lies gloomy Glencoe, a valley that Nature seems to have intended for some terrible tragedy, so wild and lowering is the pass which the brightest sunshine fails to render cheerful. Through the glen runs the wild stream of Cona, celebrated by Ossian; but even the sad spirit of the Gaelic Homer could hardly have imagined such a cruel and wanton butchery as the Massacre of Glencoe.

The MacDonalds of Glencoe were but a small branch of the clan MacDonald, mustering some two hundred armed men. They had all been busy on the Jacobite side at the battle of Killiecrankie and the subsequent campaign, and their Highland habits of cattle-lifting and raiding had made them very obnoxious to their more settled neighbours. The English Government had issued a proclamation threatening fire and sword to all of the clans who had not come in to submit themselves, and take the oath of allegiance to King William, by the first of January, 1692. MacIan, the

chief of the glen, put off the obnoxious ceremony as long as possible, but he came in at last, although owing to some fatal contretemps he did not take the oath till several days after the time named. All those concerned were fully cognisant of the fact of MacIan's submission; but it was determined to suppress the record, and execute vengeance on the clan. The Secretary for Scotland, known as the Master of Stair, a cold-blooded official, was the active agent in obtaining the signature of the King to the order for the destruction of the MacDonalds, but there is little doubt that Campbell of Glenorchie, the Earl of Breadalbane, of evil memory, was the chief instigator of the crime. The execution of the deed was confided to a party of the Earl of Argyle's regiment, which was quartered upon the MacDonalds, in Glencoe, who received their military guests in all friendliness and hospitality. The soldiers, under the command of Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon, spent a fortnight with the MacDonalds on a pleasant and cordial footing, and when all mistrust was thus removed, the final orders for the massacre were issued. Only those over seventy years of age were to be spared, all avenues were to be secured, and not a soul should escape. It was in the early watches of a bitter winter morning that the foul deed was begun. Not a spark of mercy was to be shown in the business, the chief was shot down by his own bedside, others were slaughtered by the hearths which had given hospitality to the murderers. And yet with all the good-will in the world to extirpate the whole race, the tale of blood reckoned only thirty-eight victims, although several others perished in flight through the snow.

The moveable property of the tribe was collected and driven off by the soldiers, and consisted of twelve hundred head of horses and cattle, besides goats and sheep. The tribe consisted probably of fifty or sixty families, and, living as they did in simple, patriarchal fashion, they do not seem to have been badly provided.

The massacre, it might be said, revolted the public feeling of the age, and all who were connected with it, although reached by no adequate punishment, were branded during life with the infamy attaching to the midnight murderer. The MacDonalds returned to their glen, and half a century afterwards, the descendant of the murdered MacIan joined Prince Charles's standard with a hundred and fifty stout fighting-men.

Against the land of Appin in the wide sea loch of Linnhe, lies the green Island of Lismore—the “great garden” of the Gael. The loch itself anciently marked the extent of the kingdom of Dalriada. Beyond were Picts perhaps—anyhow, tribes that did not acknowledge the chief of the Scots as lord. Now we know the country beyond Loch Linnhe as Morvern and Ardgower, with part of Loch Eil beyond, that stronghold of the Cameron race.

Morvern is mountainous and gloomy, with only a fringe of population by loch and glen, and here and there an old ruined tower on some lonely crag. On the nearest point a lonely ruin washed by the waves, is Ardtornish Castle, whose rugged halls are described by Sir Walter Scott as the dwelling of the Lords of the Isles. The castle was, indeed, the chief seat of those great chiefs, and here lived John of the Isles, who made a treaty with Edward the Fourth of England, on the footing of an independent potentate, as indeed he had every claim to be.

Entering the Sound of Mull we see the shore of Morvern recessed into the pleasant bay by “green Loch Alline’s woodland shore,” the brightest and most cheerful spot in all Morvern, which beyond stretches out in solemn mountain solitudes along the shores of the Sound.

The Loch Sunart thrusts its long arm for seventeen miles inland, and beyond is the land of Ardnamurchan, with its wild windy cape stretching into the Atlantic billows. On the south shore of Ardnamurchan, along the Loch of Sunart, it is five or six miles to the cape

From where Mingarry, sternly placed,
O’erawes the woodland and the waste.

Mingarry was the chief seat of the MacIans, and, in 1538, was besieged for three days by Lachlan Maclean of Duart, from the opposite shore of Mull, as is set forth in the register of the Privy Council: “Lauchlane McClayne, of Dowart, accompanied with a grite nowmer of thevis, brokin men, and sornaris of clannis, besydis the nowmer of ane hundred Spanyeartis, spoilit his Majesty’s isles, and assegeit the Castle of Ardnamurchan.” The hundred Spanyeartis are supposed to have been part of the crew of the Spanish war-ship Florida, one of the famous Armada, which found a refuge in Tobermory Bay.

Maclean was a stirring fellow, and gave the King’s Council some trouble, as will be seen when we come to deal with the story of the Isles. But Mingarry, at a later date, was

held for King Charles by Coll Kitto, during Montrose’s successful campaign in the Highlands. And Coll, having captured a ship in the Sound, a ship containing three kirk ministers, and the wife of one of them, shut up his prisoners in his castle till he could obtain a satisfactory exchange for them. The lady he presently released; but two of the ministers died under the severity of their captivity; not that they were treated with any great hardship, but a winter spent in a half-ruined castle, among bare stone walls and visited by all the winds of Heaven, proved too trying an experience.

The lighthouse on Ardnamurchan Point—where something of a wind seems always to be stirring, and the wild Atlantic waves are rarely stilled—looks over a wide prospect of island-studded ocean, the rude mountain-peaks of Rum and Eigg rising sheer from the waves, wild Tisee and sandy Coll, the granite outworks of this mountain land, against which the white surf continually frets, and on the horizon the long coast-line of the outer Hebrides, still more wild and lonely in their stormy scat.

The district of Ardnamurchan owes some of its bare and desolate aspect to one of the “improvers” of the last century. Both Ardnamurchan and Sunart at that date were in the possession of Sir Alexander Murray, who thought to make the district a great mining property. The York Buildings Company of London joined in the speculation, and opened mines of strontian, about 1722. Woods were cut down for props and mine-buildings; a town was built, which received the ambitious name of New York. But there was no parallel developement with the New York on the other side of the water. This was one of the speculations which brought the company to financial ruin, and with the failure of the mines the town decayed, and now every vestige of the settlement has disappeared.

The same century witnessed the completion of another commercial enterprise in a different part of the country. The canal fever was, in its way, as powerful in the last half of the eighteenth century as the railway mania in the first half of the nineteenth—isthmuses were to be pierced, new waterways everywhere to be opened. The attention of projectors of new schemes was directed

To where Kintyre, beneath the evening skies
Stretching a mighty length, among the billows lies.

To cut the mighty length by a canal, and give access from the Clyde to the western coast, in avoiding the rough passage round the Mull of Cantyre, was a project that, on both commercial and patriotic grounds, commended itself to enterprising investors. But the canal was at once too shallow and too deep—too shallow for sea-going ships, and too deep for the pockets of the speculators, who spent all the capital subscribed, and then had to apply to the Government for assistance. At the present day the Crinan Canal is devoted almost exclusively to tourists. It is a charming transit, a soft, placid journey, where the little steamer cuts its way through water-weeds and ferns. As the boat rises from lock to lock in the mountain staircase, as the passengers, glad to stretch their limbs, stream in a long procession

By cliff and copse and alder groves, the mountaineers look down upon them from their huts among the rocks in curiosity and amusement, while the more enterprising lay out tables in the wilderness, with milk and cakes for sale, while shops spring up on the way, for the supply of walking-sticks and tobacco, and other articles indispensable to the pilgrims of the day. For it is a veritable pilgrimage that we witness, recalling the merry pilgrimages of the Middle Ages: less jovial, indeed, than these, less free and picturesque, but without their license and coarseness—well, perhaps a cheap trip of a few thousands of wabster lads and others from Glasgow may raise a doubt as to this—but, anyhow, in a general way, and leaving such joyous occasions as national or local holidays out of the question.

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ASSIZE.

THE historian who investigates the past mainly by the light of criminal records is apt to get a very one-sided view of his subject, for those who “do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame,” are few indeed, compared with such as go undiscovered, while the malefactor escapes with difficulty from the vigilant emissary of the law. Nevertheless—when we get a glimpse of the ancient proceedings of the forest tribunal of the swainmote, or of the sheriff’s tourn, the piepowder, the court-baron, or the

leet—we learn many deeply-interesting matters concerning the social condition of England. The records, too, of the higher Court of the itinerant “Justices in Eyre” are not less interesting; and it may be cited, for example, that the writer of this has seen transcribed therein the stirring songs with which mediæval socialists and outlaws moved the passions of their democratic fellows. If, however, we would seek a stirring period of history, when civil disruption and the wild theories of philosophic and religious dreamers had shaken society to its core, and would see it reflected in criminal proceedings, we could not do better than attend a seventeenth-century assize.

The proceedings of Circuit Judges are attended by a certain amount of pomp in these days, but two hundred years ago it was the object of the Sheriff to give them an air of magnificence. The Judge had come from a long distance, and oftentimes was a belated traveller; had been overtaken by snow-storms in country roads or amongst the moors and the fens, partaking of the scanty fare of rural hostels when the houses of the gentry were far apart; sometimes in danger of attack from roving freebooters, or from the friends of those upon whom he was to pass judgement; but, when he approached the place of his authority, he was accompanied by a great retinue. It is recorded that, in the previous century, a Judge was met by one North-Country Sheriff, who was attended by three hundred of his own kinsmen, clad in his livery, and all bearing his name. Arrived at the city, the Judge was feasted by the mayor and the local magnates, and whatever pleasures the place afforded were freely open to him. The laudable practice of giving him a sail upon the Tyne in the civic barge at Newcastle, was put a stop to, we learn, because one Mayor, in a moment of passion, threatened to consign his judicial visitor to gaol, for the river at least was under his own jurisdiction! Such episodes, however, were rare, and usually the circuit was pleasant enough to the Judge and lawyers concerned.

In all this, saving the incident of the barge, we note little difference between the assizes of those days and these; but, when we come to the charge-sheet, and hear the evidence of the witnesses, we become sensible that times indeed have changed. Certainly the most remarkable indictments ever laid in a Court of Law were the seventeenth-century charges of witchcraft and

sorcery, which were as frequent as they were strange. The perpetual conflict of good and evil, which the later Puritans felt to be going on within themselves, necessarily recalled to the scene of mortal strife a whole host of spiritual foemen. From this it soon followed that there was scarcely a village in the land where some deluded beldame did not come to believe herself befriended by the supernatural powers of weal or woe, and deputed by them to scatter blessings or curses broadcast through the country-side. But it is more to the purpose that the country-side flourished in her smile or trembled beneath the shadow of her power. It might be, sometimes, that the fairies—the *Dii Campestres*—were summoned by her to shower benefits upon the people; but oftener the malignant hag cast an “evil eye” upon some sickly child, or brought the murrain amongst the farmer’s cattle. It must be admitted that there is something awe-inspiring in mystery, and certainly a beldame in league with the supernatural could scarcely inspire affection, though, often, when she smiled as the children languished or the harvest failed, she was pursued with implacable hatred and the thirst of insatiate revenge. As a matter of fact it is no rare thing to find, at periods, in these records of the assize, the simple words “*convicta et combusta*,” to indicate that she paid the most terrible penalty of the law.

One of the most extraordinary witchcraft cases ever presented, and in all respects a typical one, was tried in 1673 at the Morpeth Sessions, though, whether it ever went up to the assizes is uncertain. It would seem, if one can believe the evidence, that quite a party of witches, with a wizard or two, were wont to hold their “sabbat” in the neighbourhood of Morpeth at Riding Mill and elsewhere, whereat the proceedings were of the strangest. It was the custom of these beldames to repair to the meeting place, mounted sometimes upon wooden dishes, or even egg-shells, but oftener upon unfortunate victims of the human kind, whom they had saddled and bridled. Arrived at the unhallowed place they were met by their “protector,” i.e. the devil, with whom they held high feasting, he sitting, according to one, in a chair “like unto bright gold.” It was sufficient for the witches to swing upon a rope which hung there from the beams (a very general characteristic of such stories) in order to bring down upon the table whatever was

needed. It is upon evidence that, at one of these unholy meetings, a capon with the broth in which it had been boiled, a bottle of wine, a cheese, a quarter of mutton, a piece of beef, with bread, butter, ale and other good things, came down at the beldames’ bidding. A certain Ann Armstrong, a witch-finder, deposed that she had seen one of the witches dance with the devil, at a meeting which, we may suppose, was of particular jollity. These festivities over, the witches proceeded to what may be termed the business portion of the meeting, the rendering an account to the devil of the evil deeds each had done with his assistance; and, as the diabolic morality is exactly opposed to ours, those who had failed to harm their fellow-creatures were beaten in punishment by those who had not. The informant above-named deposed that at a meeting at Allensford—whereto she had been an unwilling steed, and at which she had sung, while the witches danced, having one devil to every thirteen of them—confession had been made that the beldames had acquired power over certain cattle, sometimes wholly, so that they pined away, sometimes in part, as in one case where the hind leg of an ox had been affected; that they had exercised their malign influence over several children and up-grown people, to such effect that they were dead already, or failing; and that the goods of many of the neighbours had been made waste. It would take too long to tell all the details of these curious incidents, or the means by which the influence had been acquired by the witches; but it is interesting to note that these malignant beldames had obtained their power from His Satanic Majesty by selling their souls to him, having leases of their lives for forty-two, forty-seven, fifty, and other numbers of years. With the exception of the celebrated Lancashire case, the present little-known one is about the most remarkable on record, and it is to be regretted that the sequel is uncertain.

Perhaps the next charge to be noticed should be that of brawling in church—one that came very frequently before the seventeenth-century Justices. The religious differences of the time, and the low order of preachers brought in during the Commonwealth, contributed to deprive the people of reverence, a state of things which, aided by political quarrels, led often to very unseemly outbursts. In the “Depositions from York Castle,” published by the Surtees Society, to which we

are indebted for some of our facts, a striking incident is recorded, which took place in York Minster in 1686 on the occasion of the funeral of the Countess of Strafford. The body of this great lady was brought down to York for interment, and was accompanied from Micklegate Bar to the Minster by two files of Sir John Reresby's Grenadiers, one marching on either side of the hearse. As the cortège neared the Minster it was pressed upon by a great rabble of unruly people, who assailed the soldiers, and when the body had been taken from the hearse, to the Countess's escutcheon therefrom. The soldiers would have quieted the people by gentle means, but when these latter turbulently forced themselves into the sacred edifice, and would have even entered the choir, a disturbance ensued. The Grenadiers used their halberds and the butt-ends of their guns, and the rioters, several of whom were knocked down, resorted to pommelling with the fist. Upon this a gentleman intervened, and begged the soldiers to retire, which they were willing to do; but the crowd followed, and threw stones at them, whereupon they turned and fired, without, however doing damage. The riot would have been more serious, if the soldiers, upon entreaty, had not left the Minster, but the Countess's funeral did not escape further sacrilegious interruptions, for several of her escutcheons were torn down in the choir.

This was a political riot, inspired probably by hatred of the dead Earl of Strafford, but it would be easy to give many instances of blasphemous outrage proceeding from no cause but irreverence. The Quakers, too, brought about many disturbances in church, by their habit of entering covered during the sermon, and bidding the preacher come down from his pulpit, sometimes addressing him as a "Son of Belial," a "Priest of Baal," a "Babylonish Trafficker," and so on. A picturesque and amusing instance of this kind may be given. A grey-clad Quaker enters the church of Orton in Westmoreland, where Mr. Dalton of Shap is preaching as substitute for the Vicar, Mr. Fothergill.

"Come down, thou false Fothergill!" says the Quaker to him in a loud voice.

"Who told thee," answers the preacher, "that my name was Fothergill?"

"The Spirit," replies the other.

"That spirit of thine is a lying spirit," says the clergyman conclusively; "for it is well known I am not Fothergill, but peed (one-eyed) Dalton of Shap."

Another species of crime which came not unfrequently before seventeenth-century justices, is found in deeds of violence amongst the upper classes. In those days the gentry were accustomed to resort to public-houses, as their inferiors do now, and, side-arms being constantly worn, their brawls had a more serious termination. We find even a great Scotch Earl doing his companion to death in such a quarrel. Sometimes, in the houses of their friends, angry disputes would arise, with the result of a challenge, and a meeting with drawn swords at sunrise on the morrow. Duelling, in fact, was very common amongst the gentry, as was more vulgar fighting with the lower classes; it arose sometimes from political differences, but often there was "a lady in the case," or it might be that there was no greater cause than some trifling quarrel at the gaming-table. There was fighting, too, of another sort on the high-roads, which were infested by thieves and vagabonds, who did sore hurt to travellers, unless these latter were prepared, as sometimes they were, when a battle-royal would ensue. Indeed, after the Civil Wars, men being accustomed to bloodshed, the Judges had many malefactors before them, who had sought to settle their disputes at the point of the sword, but who often paid the last forfeit on the gallows.

Others they had before them, too, of very different stamp—Jesuit priests who had come over from Douay to propagate their religion, men who went about clad as farm-servants or tradespeople, hiding often in the secret places of country manor-houses, when the Pursuivant was on their track. And there were recusants also in every class of society, members of the prescribed religion, who paid fines and suffered under disabilities of various kinds. Then, again, the Dissenters were often had up for punishment, because they had offended against the Conventicle Act, the Five Miles Act, or some other of the regulations made by the Restoration Government for the purpose of preventing the spread of the principles they preached.

Thus it will be seen that in witches and wizards, in rioters and brawlers in church, in duellists and pot-valiant bravoes, in Jesuit priests and Dissenting divines, the assizes and sessions of the seventeenth century dealt with a widely different class of offenders from the law-breakers of these days. The general charges of theft, forgery, and immorality were, indeed, the same; but

the peculiar conditions of the age had produced the more extraordinary developments of folly and crime, and had created the more unusual classes of offenders mentioned here.

A LONG RECKONING.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

I AM not, and I never was, one o' them who holds with the laying bare of private misfortunes (such as the crosses and sins that may darken a poor man's lot) for public inspection; but I have always been looked upon as a chap whose experiences are worth hearkening to beyond most men's. And such being the case, I was not surprised when it was hinted to me that if I'd tell my adventures consequence, or, as, you might say, right away on end, they might be found entertaining to a lot of mates as 'ull never have the pleasure of hearing them by word of mouth.

It was the young chap, Obadiah Poole by name, as is writing down what I'm saying—for I know nought about such matters as spellin'—that first thought my story had better be wrote down. He has a wonderful gift o' the gab, and is very handy with his pen; and I wish it to be understood, and so does he, that, if in any manner I seem to use language better than what a common collier should use, he's answerable for it, for he's had some schooling, and is ready and able to help out my story with such fine words and good spelling as is necessary to the right understanding of it.

Now, if them as read this be old enough to go back forty year in their reckoning, they can do so at once; and if they be but youngsters, they must try and think there was a time when they was not born or thought of, and when the world got on very well without them. That was the time when I was a youngster myself, working at a lone moorside colliery in the North Country, called Birch Bank.

To those people who don't make their living out of coal, no doubt a colliery is just a dirty, noisy place, and nothing more. Of course, it's plain to be seen that there is a fair share of smut and dust and general blackness, and hollering and bad language, and beer bottles and roughness

of all sorts about, which comes very conspicuous to a stranger; but, when I think of Birch Bank, what comes into my head is a narrow gully, sloping up between two round hill-sides, where there was soft green in the spring and red heather in the autumn, and a little brook that ran a roundabout course through the peaty soil down to the river below. In that gully stood our colliery, with the big shaft and the engine-house up toward the narrow end; and the pit-bank and the truck-roads and offices lying lower, toward the river. On the hill-side, among the birches, stood a few houses, where the colliers lived, and a shop or two.

When I went to Birch Bank to help load trucks on the pit-bank, I lodged in one of the houses close to the colliery. I was a cheeky young chap of my age, and a bit of a favourite with the girls; for, though no one would believe it who sees my poor face, scarred and seamed, and drawn crooked as it is now, I was very good-looking then-a-days; as merry as a jack-jumper; and such a one for singing and dancing as never was.

I'd left a girl behind me at Barnaley, who'd walked with me for more than a year. She cried when I bid her good-bye, and said she hoped I should never forget her. No more I meant to, until I saw my landlady's daughter at Birch Bank, who cooked our suppers for us, and helped to keep matters straight as regards buttons and stocking ends. She was a bonny wench, by name Agnes Mason, tall and straight, with broad, shapely shoulders, and a way of walking such as I have marked in real high ladies, only I never saw any lady with the sweet eyes of my Agnes. That, may be, young Obadiah Poole wishes me to throw in, because I have never looked into the eyes of any high lady with a view to finding out their sweetness; and he's ready to uphold the eyes of someone that he calls equal to the highest lady in the land; but I don't mean to argy, and I hope Obadiah won't shirk saying that I call him too uppish about his sweetheart, which is only the school-missis.

Anyway, Agnes Mason's eyes soon drove all thinking about the little girl at Barnaley out of my head; and I had no wish so great as to walk about in the evenings, or to take a Sunday trip with my landlady's daughter. But she wasn't so easy to make running with. Sometimes I couldn't get a word from her for days together; some-

times I'd think we were great friends, but it was a couple of years before ever I came to such understanding with her that I dared to steal a kiss; even then she pouted and pushed me away—not in game neither, like some of them do, just to provoke a lad into doing the same over again. Perhaps if she'd been easier to win, I should have cared less to win her; perhaps if she'd been just one bit more stand-off, I might have jacked the job altogether as beyond my patience; but I suppose she had a clear understanding of the whole case (for I've often noticed how clever and shrewd women are where men are stupid), and she gave in just at the right time, and promised to keep company with me till such time as she should wish to marry me or choose to throw me over.

"Zekiel Walters," she said, "you've been hanging around for a long while, and I see no better way to settle it than to give you leave to walk with me, seeing that all the girls tease me about you as if we kept company regular. But now, mark you, I don't mean to promise you anything further till you've saved some money; and, what's more, if I hear anything about un-stiddiness, or card-playing, or pigin-flying, you needn't take the trouble to come and wish me good-bye."

To all that I listened, thinking her the wisest and best of lasses, and wondering how much she had heard of the fifteen shillings I had lost to One-eyed Joe, the day we flew our piggins on Capley Moor Edge, and I promised her as I would have promised anything else she asked me.

"I'm turned of one-and-twenty, Agnes," I said, "and I'm earning three-and-sixpence most days. I dare say I shall get a rise soon, and if I could manage to save three half-crowns a week, we should have a rare little nest-egg in a couple of years."

"We should have enough to furnish a house with, that is, if I'm then minded to go into housekeeping with you; which, mind you, Zekiel Walters, I am not at this present time, and never may be."

"That just your way of putting the matter, my girl," I said. "And a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse; you've given me leave to think of you when I count over my wages, and I shall make so bold as to get you to knit a stocking to put the savings in."

For in those days there were no post-office savings banks; and it was not much thought of among we colliers to have any dealings with banks—we mostly paid into

sick clubs—but I'd rather have stowed my money away in Agnes's keeping, than in the Bank of England itself.

How clear I can remember the evening she made that bargain to walk with me if I'd be a bit stiddier. It was early in the summer before the smoke and dust from the works had dimmed the young leaves on the birches, the fine soft, feathery green trembled on the thin drooping stems against the bright clouds that floated in the sky, just like the trembling of light and dark on the river as it flowed broad and strong across the moor.

There were flowers springing in the short fine grass; the heather was beginning to grow, and the round grey knobs that come before the bracken were uncurling like live things; the sun had set behind the far-off line of Capley Moor; and there was that sort of clearness in the sky that comes before summer dusk. Obadiah 'ull have to be a rare handy chap with his fine words if he's to let you understand what a glorious evening it was, for it seems to me that all my life long there's never been but one such, and it wouldn't surprise me to be told by the clerk of the weather if he was to cast up his accounts, that there never had been such another since morning and evening first began.

Before we parted, Agnes grew gentle and softer to me, and when I slipped my arm about her waist she didn't shake it off; but leaned her head against me, and said:

"You're a good lad, Zekiel, and you've stood a lot of teasing from me. There ain't any other fellow round here as is fit to black your boots."

And proud I was to hear that from her; and I swore there and then, looking at the big moon climbing slowly up the pale side of the sky, that I'd be a true sweet-heart to her and think of no other girl, and a true husband to her whenever she should see fit to settle to go to church with me.

Now, if you have never had a sweet-heart you was truly proud of, you will hardly be able to picture how it was with me from that day forth. Obadiah thinks he knows all about it, because of his school-missis; but I can only shake my head over that, and, if he likes, he can put down that he got rather snarly over the matter. I can't see why he doesn't believe me, for he never set eyes on my Agnes, and I know his school-missis quite well by sight, and, bless you, there ain't no comparison. But then, comparing Obadiah to me as I was then, I see no reason to

complain, and to that he chimes in quite agreeable.

Anyhow, to go back to my own feelings and the matter of how far you can enter into them, let me just ask you—did you ever wake up in the morning with your heart full of someone? did you ever speak every word as if you were in the presence of someone? did you ever walk alone and work alone, and yet feel as if you were trying to please someone? did you ever feel glad when you got hurt because of the pity you get? did you ever see a pair of merry eyes in the dark shadows of a black mine, or hear a voice you loved in the rumbling sounds of hard work twelve hundred feet below the sunshine?

I don't suppose you did, because only one woman I ever saw or heard of could have so entered into the heart of any man as to grow the very life and thoughts of him; and that woman was my sweetheart—Agnes Mason.

Now, when did Dandy Davis first come to work at Birch Bank? It was sometime about then; but I made no note of the matter, my head being chiefly took up with other things.

He was a Welshman, and had a very good opinion of himself, which Welshmen often have and always stick to, however little encouragement they may meet with. He was very spruce, which was why we called him Dandy, but a good-looking chap he was not, unless for those who fancy carrotty hair—which always spoils good looks for me. But carrotty or not, Dandy and I worked on the same shift for a time and got rather thick—though he was by no means so steady as I wished to be for my girl's sake—and through me he came to lodge at Mason's.

I was a free, outspoken lad in those days, so I kept my courtship no secret from Dandy, and though he chaffed me a good bit about being so tied to a woman's apron strings that I must needs tell her what I earned, and save what she bade me, yet I felt quite sure that he'd have been proud to have such a lass to look sweet at him, and to tell him how good he was to give up drinking in public, and playing at pitch-and-toss on Sundays, and fighting-cocks or tarriers—all which Dandy enjoyed very much; and though he earned as much as I did, yet I've known him to go over to Barnsley and pop his watch when he daren't let his lodging score run on any longer.

This was Dandy as I known him and

chummed with him a goodish bit, without, as I said, reckoning the time, because his acquaintance was of no importance to my courting.

But at last there came a time when I began to feel a deal different towards him, as was but likely, seeing that it fell to my share to save his life. This was in the winter. Now you know winters thirty or forty year ago weren't the mucky, rainy, sloshy, times they are nowadays; we used to have frosts then that set in hard and lasted for weeks, till the river, strong as it was, froze, and lay across the moor bound as if with chains of gold where the sun shone dazzling along the ice. Then all us chaps would grind our skates, and go down the moor after work and skate in the starlight, if so be there was no moon, till we could hold up no longer for sleepiness.

Now, amongst all them that loved the chance of a good run on the ice, I was first and foremost, and so soon as the river was fairly coated over, I used to be there with my skates. I had a kind of joy to feel the frosty air rushing past my cheeks, and the thin ice all but trembling under the quick spurt of my skates. None of my mates could cut such pretty curves and capers as I could, or beat me in a race; so I was justly proud of myself, and I couldn't help feeling riled when the first frost threatened, to hear Dandy brag of all he could do on the outside edge and the inside edge. I felt sure I could beat him, and I wanted him to know it; though I was afraid that, Welshman like, he'd prefer his own performance even after he'd seen mine.

The first night that winter that the ice was fit to try, I got my skates down and rubbed the grease off them; then I bored the holes in my boots and filled them up with mutton fat, which is a rare plan to save trouble and temper, seeing how the grease helps the screw into the place it has kept for it. When I was ready to start I gave Agnes a kiss and took a crust for my supper to save time; and so I was soon fairly under weigh. There was a bit of a moon, which wouldn't set before eight o'clock.

Certainly there were some weak places round the bends of the river; but it was frozen a good bit harder than I had expected; and I grinned to think how the other chaps had lost a bit of fun by being over-cautious; or perhaps, thinks I, they may be coming after all, seeing I had started in too much of a hurry to know if anyone was behind me; so I turned and

skated back to see, for I dearly longed to have it out with Dandy, and to show him things which his Welsh legs wasn't capable of balancing him to do. I wasn't disappointed neither, for there was Dandy and half-a-dozen others trying a bit of ice on the overflow below the bridge.

"Come on, you chaps," I shouted, "the ice is thicker nor you think, and it's thickening every minute; come along, Dandy, and let's see you cut the figure three, or dance a hornpipe. Let's see if you can do this what I'm at now."

And I began a very pretty trick of crossing curves that I was well up to. The others hollered back that they didn't care to try the river that night for fear of mishaps; but Dandy seemed half inclined, and it only wanted a bit more chaff to bring him along to show off his performances alongside of mine, though he might have known he'd come off second best. And second best he was too, though he'd scarce own to it. Nevertheless, he was no fool on his skates, and fairly might be allowed to brag a bit.

Before we'd settled the matter to our satisfaction, the moon went down, and the other chaps went up home, while we stayed racing to and fro, with only the light of the stars to show us the dangerous places. Dandy always put down what befel him to the darkness; but I would not blame it altogether on anything else but his own clumsiness. However, it's no use giving an opinion to a Welshman.

Anyway, all I know for sure is, that in a place where because of high banks and brushwood, Dandy's shape was nothing more to me than a moving blackness among the shadows, I heard a crash and a shout; and though I strained my eyes, I could see nought between me and the bushes any longer. Now just you think what I felt like in the darkness that lay betwixt those two banks, and which hid the chance of a cold, cruel death from me, and made it a risk of life to stretch out a hand to save that struggling, drowning man.

I thought of Agnes, as I always did at all times, and I wondered how she'd feel if I were drowned in the cold, deep river, and if my body was never found till the thaw came. I half thought that I ought to make the best of my way back, and leave Dandy to struggle out by his own strength, if he could; and if not—well, it was better he should drown alone than that we both should be lost.

It only took the time a flash of lightning wants for me to think these things; then there came the sound of a gasping and gurgling, and a crackling of ice, as if he had risen to the surface, and was trying to cling to the edges of the hole he was in. I heard my name called in a piteous, helpless kind of cry, which, funny enough, echoed back from somewhere, though I'd never known there was an echo there before. And I could not skate another stroke away, but I wheeled round and came as cautious as I could, and as far as I dare; then I threw my comforter to Dandy, and he caught hold of it, and I tried to help him out; but the ice broke under him, and there seemed nothing to be done, for I daren't trust my weight long in one place. At last I got to the bank, which he was not very far from, and I managed to get a foothold among the roots of the bushes, and then one way or another he broke along through the ice till he got there too. But the danger wasn't over then—it would have been a good bit easier for him to have dragged me in than it was for me to drag him out. I can't say how I did it, nor how long it took to do, but at last we stood together—me panting and trembling, him dripping and freezing, and clinging on tight to me, for his strength was all used up with his struggles and his terror. I hauled him along as hard as I could, till we'd got about half way home, not even stopping to pull off my skates; and then I couldn't help thinking of the damage I was doing to my nice, sharp irons.

"Zekiel," says Dandy, as we sat down on a bank, while I unstrapped first his skates and then mine, "Zekiel, I shan't forget this night's work in a hurry; you've saved my life, and I shall try to make it up to you as long as ever I live."

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A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 960. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IV. THE TANGLED WEB.

AT the introduction Alexis Kenyon impulsively stretched out her hand.

"I heard you preach on Sunday," she exclaimed eagerly; "and the Rector called yesterday, and was speaking so much about you. I can't look upon you as a stranger!"

Adrian Lyle took the beautiful hand so frankly and graciously extended.

"I am afraid," he said, "that the circumstances of our acquaintanceship are not auspicious. I am trespassing on your father's grounds—so at least your cousin informed me a few moments ago—but perhaps my explanation——"

She stopped him with a gesture. "Do not explain," she said, "it would only bore me, and it could make no difference. Of course you would have called one day or other. Chance has hastened your visit—that is all. Will you come to the Abbey and see my father?"

"Not to-night, if you will excuse me," the young clergyman answered. "It is somewhat late for a call; and, to tell you the truth, I am in haste to reach the village. I was told there was a short cut through the park that I might use, but I fear I have missed it."

"The explanation, after all," said Alexis, smiling. "Yes, this is not the way; but my cousin will soon put you right," she added, turning to Neale.

He did not look pleased at the task, but politeness forbade any outward expression

of reluctance; besides he was in momentary dread that Adrian Lyle might let fall something about their former acquaintanceship and its attendant circumstances.

"Of course," he said; "I shall be delighted."

"And your visit," said Alexis, "is only postponed. You said something on Sunday that surprised me—from a pulpit. I have a fancy that you are not orthodox, any more than myself. Your Rector and I always quarrel. I believe he thinks I am next door to a heathen. But indeed I am not; only it is stupid to think exactly like everyone else—that is to say, if you give yourself the trouble of thinking at all. Most people don't."

The young clergyman surveyed her gravely, and with some surprise.

"Was I unorthodox?" he said. "I thought I was particularly careful."

"You said that ignorance of scientific facts, blind belief, and hysterical emotion, constituted the general idea of religion—a religion devoid of use, or comfort, or content. You see I have a good memory, Mr. Lyle."

"Yes," he said, with a smile at the beautiful face, which had no listlessness and no irony now. "And did you think I was wrong in saying so much?"

"On the contrary. I quite agreed with you. I am not a religious person myself," she went on coolly. "If I have ever had convictions they have never been of the right sort, and I have never found anyone capable of convincing me that faith is not an accident of birth, and morality a mere matter of temperament. I have been worried and lectured by upholders of all creeds, until I quite sympathised with the vengeance of that bewildered heathen whose natural instincts got the better of conversion. Do you know the story?"

"No," said Adrian Lyle with a smile. "I should like to hear it."

"Well, first a Roman Catholic missionary went out to this benighted savage, and his teaching was so effective that he became a Roman Catholic, and made his tribe follow his example. A short time afterwards a Protestant missionary arrived on the scene, and he got the ear of the sable monarch and persuaded him that his faith was all wrong, and so worked upon his feelings that he recanted, and was baptized, and received into the new Church. A year or so passed by when, by some good fortune, a Dissenter came to the island, and he being a zealous and very pious man, straightway took it into his head that he must convert the chief to his form of worship. That dignitary lost his patience, called his tribe together, and summoned the three missionaries to be present. He then explained to his followers that, as the white man's God seemed such a very troublesome being to worship, he thought they had best return to their old ways, and ended his discourse by requesting that the three teachers might be served up for supper at the grand festival that would effectually celebrate that return! What do you think of the story?" she added, glancing with demure eyes at Adrian Lyle's grave face.

"I think," he said, "that my sympathies go with the poor savage. I never allege that religion and creed are one and the same thing."

"Then," said Alexis, "you are the first sensible clergyman I have ever met. Each sect wants the monopoly. Their creed, their faith, their Church—no other. The others are all wrong. For my part, there is no class with whom I have greater sympathy than Jews. I have found more clever, brilliant, and high-minded people among the Jews—I mean the strict conforming Jews—than among the so-called Christians, whether High Church, Low Church, or Nonconformists. You see my sympathies are liberal, Mr. Lyle."

"Have you made yourself acquainted with the doctrines of each class?" asked Adrian Lyle.

"Yes, and with many more that I have not named."

"Are we to stand here all night while you expound them?" demanded her cousin sarcastically. "I should recommend a retreat to the house."

"Neale thinks there is a time and place

for all things," said Alexis. "Perhaps he is right."

"I certainly cannot see why you should begin a religious argument now," said Kenyon sulkily.

He was nervous and impatient. Every moment that kept Adrian Lyle by his cousin's side was a moment of danger.

Alexis looked at him critically, and then turned and met the glance of the young clergyman. It was more speculative than admiring, and, as such, interested her for the first time by the absolute novelty of what it conveyed.

"I will not detain you any longer," she said. "Neale is right. Neither place nor time is suitable for such a discussion as we were drifting into."

Then a little mysterious smile came to her lips.

"Consider it postponed," she said, and held out her hand with unusual cordiality. Adrian Lyle took it with a momentary wonder that it was so small and cool, and unlike any other woman's hand he had ever touched. Then she turned away without further words, and was lost to sight amidst the brushwood.

For a moment absolute silence reigned between the two young men, as Neale led the way back to the path.

Adrian Lyle was the first to break it.

"Your cousin, you said?" he remarked enquiringly. "Is—is your wife also staying with you at the Abbey?"

"No," said Neale almost sullenly. "Of course not. They know nothing about—that. My uncle would be furious if he knew, and I can't afford to ruin all my prospects. I suppose," he added turning to his companion, "I can trust you to keep my secret for a while, till I see how the old fellow is disposed."

"Have you done what you promised?" asked Adrian Lyle slowly.

Neale was a few steps in advance; the darkness hid the flush that dyed his face and brow; his voice was low and unsteady as he answered:

"Yes, I have; and now I hold you to your side of the bargain. You will keep my secret until I give you leave to speak?"

"Yes," answered Adrian Lyle; "a promise is a promise; but I trust it may not be necessary to keep the secret very long. Her presence would win your forgiveness with anyone, I feel assured. Why not confide in your cousin? They say she can do anything with her father."

"Confide in Alexis!" burst wrathfully from Neale Kenyon's lips. "Why, my uncle has made up his mind that I am to marry her! It has been an understood thing ever since we were children."

"All the more reason, then, that you should explain matters," said Adrian Lyle coldly. "It seems to me you are wronging two women instead of one."

"Oh, my good sir," said Neale lightly, "you take too serious a view of the matter, I assure you. Gretchen is all right; and I am only awaiting a favourable opportunity to explain matters to Sir Roy. As for Miss Kenyon, she doesn't care a straw about me, so I'm not spoiling her prospects. She could marry a Duke or a Prince to-morrow if she pleased."

"Then why is Sir Roy so bent on her marrying you?" asked Adrian Lyle, in excusable surprise.

"Because he wants her to have the Abbey," answered the young man. "If he thought she or I would marry a stranger, he'd get married himself, in hopes of having an heir in the direct line. And there's every probability he would. In that case, farewell to my prospects. I am only a penniless Lieutenant in Her Majesty's service, and indebted to Sir Roy for an allowance like a schoolboy. I can't afford to offend him—especially now," he added, with a sudden flush, as he remembered the comforts and luxuries he had provided for Gretchen.

Adrian Lyle's face grew sterner and colder than ever.

"You are not acting rightly, or honourably," he said.

Neale made an impatient gesture.

"I cannot expect you to understand," he said. "I might even tell you that you have no warrant for interference; but, let the future speak for me. If I could see my way clear, Heaven knows I would not hesitate; but I must wait, and trust to time."

He paused, and looked his companion in the face. "That," he said, pointing before him, "is your way. It seems odd that you should be here. You have taken the curacy, I suppose?"

"Yes," said the young clergyman gravely. "I came here last week. I knew Mr. Bray some years ago."

"I am only staying at the Abbey for a few days," said Kenyon hurriedly, as if offering an explanation. "Then I must run up to town to arrange about rejoining my regiment. It is at Madras at present."

Adrian Lyle pushed the dark wave of hair off from his brow—his face looked pale and disturbed.

"You will take her, I suppose," he said abruptly, "if you go?"

"Of course," Kenyon answered, with an inward feeling of irritation that anyone save himself should allude to Gretchen as a personal pronoun.

There was a moment or two of silence.

Then Adrian Lyle glanced up at his companion's face. "I will wish you good-night," he said. "I am quite aware you look upon my being here as a misfortune; but, as you justly observed, I have no right to interfere with your actions."

"And I can depend on your silence?" exclaimed Kenyon eagerly.

A faint smile of contempt crossed the young clergyman's lips. "I have given you my word," he said coldly, and walked away under the heavy canopy of boughs, leaving Kenyon standing there perplexed and disturbed.

As the tall, erect figure disappeared in the distance, Neale turned homewards with knitted brow and stern, compressed lips.

"He—of all others," he muttered. "What scurvy tricks Fate plays!"

Some inward consciousness lit up his knowledge of his own actions, and showed them as burdened with results far different to those which he had proposed to himself. He was drifting into fresh entanglements. Sir Roy had absolutely forced him into a false position with his cousin and that cousin herself, instead of helping him as he had expected, seemed determined to add fresh complications to his already complicated schemes.

"I believe it is sheer aggravation," he thought savagely. "If she'd only fall in love with someone! Why can't she? Other girls do readily enough; but that sphinx of coldness and incomprehensibility to spoil my plans like this! It's enough to make a fellow blow his brains out!"

He took off his hat, and let the cool night wind play over his heated forehead. His eyes gazed down the dim and leafy distance, yet saw nothing but endless vexations and worries arising out of one rash impulse that never till now had he confessed he regretted. Slowly and moodily he walked on—irresolute, impatient; but still pitying himself as the victim of circumstances, instead of acknowledging his fault in bringing those circumstances about.

"What could I have done?" he asked

himself for the hundredth time. "It was a thousand pities I ever went to Dornbach; and then she was so sweet and so lovely—and—she showed so plainly that she loved me. I should have been a brute to throw her over, and yet—oh, confound that fellow Lyle! Who could have dreamt of his crossing my path? What a fool I was to make a friend of him! All clergymen are so fond of meddling in one's private affairs for 'conscience sake.' There's no doubt I'm in a most infernal fix, and how to get out of it I don't know. I really wonder that fellow didn't insist on proofs of my promise instead of accepting my bare word."

Then a hot flush swept to his brow, even in the darkness and solitude of the woods; for conscience whispered "and your word was false!"

CHAPTER V. "HOW ODD MEN ARE!"

DISTURBED and ill at ease Adrian Lyle took his way to the village. He paused once, and looked up at the clear evening sky, while an expression of deep pain clouded his face. "All these weary weeks and days," he muttered, "and my one prayer 'keep us apart!' and here temptation meets me over again! How it all comes back—my distrust of him—my compassion for her; compassion——!" he bent his head; a bitter smile crossed his lips. "Let me be honest with myself, is it only compassion? Why has all womanhood been to me but an impersonal thing till the day I looked on that sweet face? Why do I feel this nervous horror and hatred of Neale Kenyon, at the mere suspicion he has wronged that trusting child? Why do I long, yet dread, to meet her glance and hear her voice once more? Is it possible that I am too false and cowardly to confess the truth? Is it possible that I fail to realise what I dimly suspected, when I took counsel with myself among the lonely solitudes of Abruzzi?"

He bent his head. For a moment a sort of horror seemed to seize him. His power of will seemed gone, and he found himself face to face with an undreamt-of evil. "It is against conscience, against reason, against Heaven!" he muttered, and with head down-bent he strode off rapidly, almost fiercely, through the darkening woods. But he knew, let it be against what it might, that the madness had crept into his soul, that for good or ill the light of Gretchen's eyes, the smile on Gretchen's lips, were to haunt

his memory and people his dreams with sad and forlorn hopes, until his heart should cease to beat, and his pulses cease to thrill!

He had not even asked where she was; but that made no difference, she was a living presence whether near or afar. Like sunshine she had stolen across his life—its hard duties, its painful struggles, its sad and sometimes hopeless efforts. Without consciousness, without desire, that lovely presence had set its seal upon his memory, and he could as soon forget the reality of his own existence, as the subtle sweetness of hers.

The thought of her in her innocent, unconscious happiness smote him like a cruel blow. Without a shadow to dim her belief in the man she loved; without one past experience to shake her faith in the existence of perpetual joy; with all the priceless illusions of youth, and hope, and unflinching trust: so the picture framed itself before his eyes, and seemed to ask his sympathy.

"Heaven grant she may never know!" he prayed, as the shadow of that old mistrust in Neale Kenyon robbed the picture of its brightness. "After all, he says he has kept his promise—and she is safe. Why can I not believe it?"

But try as he might, he knew that such belief was not easy; that it had not banished the shadow of his old distrust even for one brief hour.

That night Alexis Kenyon dismissed her maid somewhat earlier than usual, and drawing her chair up to the open window with its wide, sweeping view of the beautiful grounds, and green level fields, and winding river, gave herself up to a long and somewhat serious train of thought.

"I shall be tired of him in a month," she said to herself. "And yet I think—yes, I am almost sure I shall marry him. It will be almost the first time I have obeyed my father in any desire or wish. I suppose I owe him something."

Her long, rich hair hung in heavy, curling masses about her slight figure; her face in the moon-rays looked pure and exquisite as sculpture; but the mouth was set in cold and scornful lines; her heart never quickened by one beat as she dwelt on her acknowledged lover and her probable marriage.

"How odd men are!" she mused, with that irony that was part of herself. "He has said nothing to-night. Is it because he feels secure or—afraid? I hope he will

not bore me with love-making. I should hate it."

Then she glanced up at the clear sky and the radiant starlight. Half unconsciously they associated themselves with the calm and thoughtful face on which to-night she had looked for the second time in her life.

"There are power and strength of character in him," she thought. "It would not be easy to overthrow the balance of that mind."

Then a little odd smile hovered over her lips.

"I should like to try, all the same," came drifting through her brain, with an ignoble desire, born more of idleness than of vanity.

For the first time, eyes that were critical almost to severity had met her own; lips unsmiling and unflattering had answered her light words.

"He is the sort of man who would have an ideal; but the ideal would not be like me," she thought. "Would it be possible to overthrow it, I wonder? The cloth does not alter the nature of the man beneath."

Yet as her thoughts dwelt on that face, at once so gentle and so cold, so patient and so strong, she felt that for the first time in her spoilt and selfish life she had met a nature which might resist or compel the wilfulness of her own.

She had a gift of reading character, and was seldom mistaken in her judgement. Few men were ever capable of raising more than a languid interest in her; still fewer failed to verify the course she predicted. But Adrian Lyle baffled her usual keen and ready penetration. She speculated about him now with something more nearly approaching interest than she had acknowledged herself capable of feeling. She even found herself dimly wondering when he would call, and how she could best surprise him into sympathy or excitement—anything to baffle that calm, grave strength which made her feel like a child in his presence, and half ashamed of the sophistries and ironies that seemed to ring false, like the base coin they were.

She rose at last and closed the window; a little shiver ran through her as she turned away. She stood upright before the long mirror that showed her the grace and slenderness of her figure in its loose draperies; the rich masses of hair that fell about her shoulders; the deep, mournful, far-searching gaze of her dark eyes.

"What do men see in me, I wonder?" she speculated, looking at herself as critically as she would have looked at a stranger. "There are hundreds of women more beautiful; there are thousands ready to love and adore, while I am completely indifferent; and yet——"

She turned away impatiently. A little, half suppressed sigh finished the sentence.

"Shall I ever care?" she thought, as she had thought scores and scores of times in her spoilt, capricious life. "I think not. I am beyond the age of illusions. I have not reached that of egotism. I doubt if there is any intermediate ground."

At breakfast next morning Neale Kenyon had quite recovered his spirits. Alexis was her usual, languid, scornful self, and scarcely seemed to notice his presence. This fact, however, did not seem to depress him in any way. With his customary disregard of consequences, he had made up his mind not to worry about his uncle's wishes, and just to let things drift. He would remain at the Abbey to-day, but that was all. On the morrow he must go up to town, and if he could rejoin his regiment at once, why, so much the better. Time would work wonders. Anything and everything might happen. The knot of entanglement might unravel itself, or be cut asunder. If only Sir Roy died unmarried, he would have nothing to fear for the future. He could acknowledge Gretchen before the world; and as for Alexis, she could take a Prince to console her if she liked. It would be easy enough to quarrel with her at any time. She was always giving occasion for it.

As these thoughts ran through his mind, he suddenly raised his eyes and met her glance. It was indolent, amused, ironical. It sent a sudden rush of colour to his face, and made him wonder whether she had any suspicion of his thoughts.

"Will you see your friend to-day?" she asked carelessly. "If you do, invite him to dinner. I want papa to know him."

Neale looked at her stupidly.

"My friend?" he echoed.

"Oh," she said with impatience, "you know whom I mean. The curate, of course. Perhaps I should have said your travelling companion. Was he interesting?"

"Yes—es," stammered Neale, somewhat confusedly. "He is very clever, and—all that. Rather a prig, though."

"Indeed?" she said, as if amused at the

description. "I should not have suspected it. You had not much in common, then?"

"You appear to be very much interested in Adrian Lyle!" said Neale, sulkily. "I always understood you hated curates."

"No, only pity them as a race. It has not yet been my good fortune to meet one who was in any degree a credit to his sex, or any ornament to his profession."

"And you think Adrian Lyle is both?"

"Oh, I did not admit that," she said, with her little ambiguous smile. "Let me see! His social status makes him the servant of our worthy Mr. Bray; obedient to his orders, and amenable to his superior judgement—an odd arrangement, when you consider the different mental force of each man; an arrangement only possible to such a body as are the superior clergy—a body whose head and chief can 'license' an educated and well-born gentleman to an office as if he were a cabman or a publican."

"There must be a head and chief in all important matters," said Sir Roy, looking up. "What a Radical you are, Alexis!"

"Oh, I assure you I am not," she said gravely. "I am only upholding the superiority of mind over matter, and wondering a little why Fate has seen fit to place the Rev. Adrian Lyle under the rule and command of the Rev. Joseph Bray."

"He may rise to a Bishopric in time," said her cousin. "I suppose even Bishops were curates once."

"Adrian Lyle!" murmured Sir Roy. "Who is he? I seem to know the name."

"Mr. Bray was telling us about him," explained Alexis.

"Ah, to be sure—yes. Very clever, he said. Ask him to dinner, my dear, if you like him. Only I hope he has none of those new-fangled, half-Romish notions that are so much in fashion now. I can't stand that."

"Oh, he's all right," said Neale carelessly. "You may be sure of that, or Alexis wouldn't express interest in him."

"Did I express—interest?" said his cousin coolly. "Only curiosity, was it not?"

She looked at him with the demure unconsciousness of a child. She had discovered that the mention of Adrian Lyle's name disturbed and irritated him. She resolved to know the reason, and therefore the whim of bringing them together became gradually a fixed resolve.

"I think," she went on, as she lazily stirred her coffee, "you are not quite so

good-tempered as you used to be. Perhaps that foreign tour has a little upset your digestion? That is always the secret of a man's amiability."

He did not answer for a moment or two. He found it more difficult than of yore to bear her railery, or parry her sharp wit.

"You had better write your invitation, and I will leave it," he said at last. "Lyle is sure to be out district-visiting or something of that sort; and as you are anxious to see him, it's a pity to leave it to chance."

She smiled and glanced at him somewhat meaningly.

"I am not anxious," she said; "or if so, it is more on your account than my own. But your suggestion is wise. Kind as chance usually is to me, I won't trust entirely to its good offices now."

Then she rose from the table.

"I am going to the library," she said. "Come to me in a quarter of an hour for the note."

As she left the room Sir Roy looked somewhat anxiously at his nephew.

"What is this new fancy?" he asked. "Usually Alexis never cares to ask any man here. Is this Adrian Lyle young?"

"I believe so," Neale answered moodily. "He's a man with opinions, at all events; perhaps that's why Alexis likes him. But there's one comfort, they're sure to argue and then quarrel."

Sir Roy laughed. "Well, my boy, don't get jealous. You know she is wilful, and perhaps I have spoilt her; but she'll turn out all right, never fear."

Neale made no answer, but devoted himself to his correspondence and papers, awaiting the expiration of that quarter of an hour, which he felt must bring about some explanation between himself and his cousin.

He dreaded it intensely, easy as it had looked when he had rehearsed the scene and the words to himself. His courage was ebbing rapidly away, as Alexis in the library was dashing off the few graceful lines that invited Adrian Lyle there that night. When the moment arrived and he went into her presence, her keen eyes noted directly the signs of inward perturbation.

"He is going to propose," she thought, and involuntarily pushed the note aside, so that the delicate superscription no longer faced her.

Then she leant back in her chair, and looked with indolent amusement at Neale Kenyon's face.

"Have you anything on your mind?" she asked. "If so, I should advise you to unburden it. Your look is expressive of intense misery."

He coloured to the temples.

"Alexis," he said, "I—I want to know if it is true what—what my uncle has told me, that you have agreed——"

"Agreed to marry you?" she queried with unaltered composure. "Yes, it is true. I believe it is the first time in my life I ever have agreed to my father's wishes. But it is no new thing for either of us to hear. Weren't we betrothed in the nursery, or something to that effect?"

The blood had receded from Neale Kenyon's face, leaving it white as death.

She noted the signs of agitation with inward amusement.

"How odd that men should care like—that!" she thought to herself, and wondered, too, that neither thrill nor terror disturbed her own serenity.

"It needn't make any difference yet," she went on presently. "We are both young enough to wait, and I should be sorry to interfere with your profession or its duties. You want to join your regiment, of course?"

"I—I was thinking so," he stammered confusedly.

Alexis glanced at him with a faint gleam of amusement in her dark eyes. "Assuredly being in love does not improve a man!" she thought—but aloud she merely said, "Do just as you please. There is no need to trumpet abroad the fact that two more idiots are about to make martyrs of themselves. For of course that's what it will come to; only I hope we shall be sensible enough to make our martyrdom as light as possible. If one chooses to wear peas in one's shoes, it is as well to boil them first."

"Really," he said half indignant, half vexed at her tone, "you pay yourself a poor compliment."

She shrugged her shoulders and put on her air of cold indifference. "I am only stating a fact," she said. "It is absurd to pretend there is any halo of romance about this affair. But it had to be done, and we may be just as good friends as ever. Papa set his heart on the match when we were in the school-room. It is no new thing—is it?"

"You—you wish no mention to be made of it at present?" he asked with hesitation, and looking with ill-concealed dread at the note on the writing-table.

"Certainly. There will be time enough to speak about it, when—well—when you return from India. Isn't it to India that you are going? We have made papa happy, and set his mind at rest. If there is a satisfaction in doing one's duty, we ought to be experiencing it. Are you?"

Again that hot flush mounted to his temples. He felt that he almost hated this mocking, cold-hearted creature. She leant back there, making a perfect picture—as she had a way of doing—against the dark oak and sombre colouring around her. The long soft folds of creamy Indian silk, touched here and there with knots of palest primrose ribbon, floated around her as no other woman's draperies ever seemed to float. Neale could not help giving some admiration to the picture, though he felt none at that moment for the woman.

"What I experience or feel can't be of much account to you," he said indignantly. "Of course you will please yourself, as you always do. I would only like to say that you are not to consider yourself bound in any way if—if you ever should change your mind. I don't want you to make any sacrifice, or—or——"

"I think," she said mockingly, "I would let that sentence stand as it is. You really can't improve it. Of course I am overwhelmed with gratitude at your magnanimity. I will do you the justice to believe that you care for me infinitely more than I deserve. All the same, having arrived at this happy understanding, it would be somewhat unfair, would it not, if I tossed you aside at the first passing whim? No; I think you may trust me, even if you are in India."

She smiled at him with that little, odd, mysterious smile he knew so well, and extended her hand.

"I suppose," she said, as he took it and laid his lips on the cool, fair skin, "I ought to be magnanimous, too. So I will give you permission to go where you like, and do what you please for a year. At the end of that time you may report yourself if you feel inclined. And now there's nothing more to be said, I fancy. There is my note. Au revoir."

She rose as she spoke, and looked at him. Again he felt the colour spring to his brow, and raged inwardly at its false interpretation. He could say nothing. He felt stupefied and bewildered. He went to the door and opened it, and she passed out without another word.

Then, as the door closed, he seized the

note, and gazed at the address upon it with a sudden sense of rage and terror.

"If ever they become friends?" he thought.

THE FOLK-LORE OF MARRIAGE.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART III.

AMONGST the less civilised nations, the marriage contract is a remarkably simple matter. Usually the wives are purchased by the highest bidder, though occasionally a girl is given away by her parents to a man in recompense for some service rendered.

The Macusi Indian abstains entirely from food for some time previous to taking a wife. When his probationary period has expired, the marriage is performed by the chief of the tribe, in the centre of a few square yards of the savannah which has been cleared of grass and stones. Over this space mats, made of the parallel strips of the *seta* palm, are spread. When all is ready, the bride and bridegroom are placed in the clearing, round which the whole village population have gathered. On the completion of the ceremony, which is exceedingly brief, the husband immediately transports himself and his possessions to his father-in-law's house, where he lives and works. When the family of the young couple becomes too large to be comfortably housed in the father-in-law's establishment, the young husband builds a house for himself by the side of that of his wife's father.

A complete and final separation between husband and wife may be made at the will of the husband at any time before the birth of children; but afterwards, nothing but death can free the one from the other. If during the courtship he deserts his first love, he may, strangely enough, claim all the durable presents he has given, such as beads and other ornaments.

Before he is allowed to choose a wife, he must prove that he is a man and can do man's work. Without flinching, he suffers the infliction of wounds in his flesh; or he allows himself to be sewn up in a hammock full of live ants; or by some other test equally cruel and barbarous he evinces his courage and claim to all the privileges that accrue to the arrival at the full estate of manhood. He then clears a space in the forest, to be planted with cassava, and brings in as much game as possible, to demonstrate that he is equal to the task of

supporting, not only himself, but others whom it may hereafter be his duty and privilege to support.

The innocence of the North-West Indian maiden is as marked as her colour. She is trained from her earliest childhood to work, and, by the time she has reached the age of sixteen years, is a perfect housewife. Should she secure a white man for a husband, she makes him an exemplary wife. Her home is her sole comfort—rare virtue!—and her husband's comfort her sole ambition.

The aspiring white or dusky bridegroom must be well known in the tribe before he can hope to win a wife. Her people want to understand him thoroughly, and require proof that he can support not only his wife, but, in an emergency, the whole of her relatives. He must be a warm-hearted man, and the possessor of a temper warranted to keep in any domestic outbreak; and he must, moreover, own a good house or lodge, and half a dozen horses. If he combine in himself all these great qualifications, he may confidently "a-wooloo go."

Having selected a wife, he makes application to the girl's mother. A council of the family is held, and a price fixed upon for the maiden. If she be pretty, the price will be a gun, two horses, and a lot of provisions, blankets, and cloth.

A gun is valued at fifty dollars, and the total value of all the articles must at least reach one hundred and fifty dollars. Then he tries to beat the dame down, and, if he succeeds, he knows there is some reason for letting the girl go; if not, he understands he is making a good choice.

Admiral Hewitt, while on his mission to King John of Abyssinia on behalf of our Government, witnessed an interesting matrimonial celebration in Adowa. The town is a collection of eight or nine hundred inhabitants—their houses mere huts—and is too subject to the raids of hostile tribes to present the flourishing appearance which the capital of a large kingdom should. As with all barbarous nations—for, although nominally Christian, the Abyssinians can be called little else—the weddings are celebrated with a curious jumble of religious rites and social ceremonies, apparently borrowed from Christian, Mohammedan, Jewish, and the aboriginal traditions. There is a civil ceremony at the house of the bride's father, where oaths of fidelity are exchanged, and subsequently a religious service. After the former, the bridegroom, probably in imitation of the

custom of his forefathers of capturing their wives by force, takes his bride in his arms and carries her either to his house or her own. The crowd of invited guests follow him and aid him in holding the orthodox nuptial canopy over her. There is, of course, unlimited feasting, and an enormous quantity of spirituous liquor is consumed, of which the priest, who in Abyssinia is a veritable jovial friar, takes his full share.

The associations connected with the marriage rites among the Kirghese of the northern steppes of Turkestan are most formidable, involving the payment of a "kalim," besides the giving of various presents. The first portion is paid by the match-maker when negotiations are entered into, but the second not for twelve months, unless the bridegroom be wealthy. Should the bride elect die during this period, her parents must return all they have received, or give their next daughter as a substitute, together with a fine of one or two horses and robes or furs. This same law applies in the event of the girl jilting her suitor. On the other hand should the man die, his parents must either pay a fine and forfeit the "kalim," or take the girl for their next son. At the expiration of the term of betrothal the bridegroom, attired in his best, goes with his friends to the "aul," or village of the bride, where a tent has been prepared for his reception. Throughout the ceremonies of betrothal, the bride's brother has the right of pilfering from the bridegroom whatever he pleases; but at the wedding the bride's relatives, near and distant, come and take as presents almost everything he has. His hat, coat, girdle, horse, saddle, and all that he has are pilfered, each one taking an article, remarking that it is for the education of the bride. There is, however, some reciprocity in the matter, for when the relatives of the bride visit the "aul" of the bridegroom, they are fleeced in exactly the same manner. On the payment of the "kalim" the parents of the bride are bound to give up their daughter, giving her as a dowry a "kibitka," or tent, a camel or riding horse, and a number of cattle, according to their position in life, also a bride's headdress called "saoukele," or, if poor, another called a "jaoulonk," besides a bed, crockery, and trunk of wearing apparel.

A strange custom prevails with respect to matrimonial contracts among the natives of Northern Siberia. When a young native desires to marry, he goes to the father of the girl of his choice, and a price

is agreed upon, one-half of which is then paid down. The prospective son-in-law at once takes up his residence with the family of his lady-love, and resides with them a year. If at the end of that time he still desires to marry the girl he can pay the other half, and they are married on the next visit of the priest; if he does not want to marry her he need not do so, and simply loses the half he paid at the start.

M. Reclus says the islanders of New Guinea are married, not according to their own inclinations, but those of their parents. They are most frequently affianced at a very tender age, but are afterwards forbidden to associate with each other; indeed, this is carried so far that the girl may not even look at her future husband. Both must avoid all contact with the members, masculine and feminine, of the family into which they are about to enter. Their wedding ceremonies are characterized by a reserve and a modesty very remarkable in a savage people of the tropics. Adorned with the most beautiful ornaments, the bride is conducted at night in a torchlight procession through the village. One woman carries her on her back, while another binds her arms as though she were a captive, and leads her by the rope to the house of her betrothed. This is a symbol of slavery, a souvenir of the ancient servitude which the aristocratic class has preserved. There is nothing of this in the processions of the poor. On reaching their destination, the bridegroom is presented to the bride's relatives, who lead him into her chamber. She awaits him with her back turned, indicating that she does not dare to meet his conquering gaze. The young man approaches till within two feet of her, turns on his heel, and then they are back to back, in the midst of a numerous assembly, the men on one side, the women on the other. After the entertainment the bride is led into her own room, still not daring to meet the terrible glance of her husband, and keeping her back turned to the door; seeing this, the husband also turns his back on her. The whole night is spent in this manner; they sit there motionless, having some one to brush away the flies, and without speaking a word. If they grow sleepy some one of the assistants, who take turns in doing this service, nudges him with his elbow. If they keep wide awake, they are assured of a long life and green old age. In the morning they separate, still without looking at each

other, in order to refresh themselves after the fatigues of the previous night. This performance is continued for four nights, and on the fifth morning, with the first rays of the sun, the young people may look each other full in the face. That suffices; the marriage is considered accomplished, and the newly-wedded pair receive the customary congratulations. One more night the watchers remain, and then the husband is bound in honour to slip away before dawn, since his bride cannot be expected yet to endure a second time in broad daylight his terrible look; she will not dare to meet his gaze until after an interval of four more days and nights.

So much so for customs in other countries; now, once more, for English marriage customs in the past.

In an old magazine for June, 1778, the following item occurs: "A few days ago was married at St. Bridget's Church, in Chester, Mr. George Harding, aged one-hundred-and-seven, to Mrs. Catherine Woodward, aged eighty-three. So singular a union could not fail of exciting the admiration and surprise of a numerous congregation before the ceremony was performed. The bridegroom served in the army thirty-nine years, during the reigns of Queen Anne, George the First, and part of George the Second. He is now particularly hearty, in great spirits, and retains all his faculties to an extraordinary perfection. This is his fifth wife; the last one he married in his hundred-and-fifth year; and he is Mrs. Woodward's fourth husband. It is also worthy of observation that the above old man's diet has been for the last thirty years chiefly buttermilk boiled with a little flour, and bread and cheese."

Here is another curious marriage notice of the same character: "Lately, at Newcastle, Mr. Silvertop to Mrs. Pearson. This is the third time that the lady has been before the altar in the character of a bride, and there has been something remarkable in each of her three connubial engagements. Her first husband was a Quaker; her second, a Roman Catholic; and her third, a Protestant of the Established Church. Each husband was twice her age. At sixteen, she married a gentleman of thirty-two; at thirty, she took one at sixty; and now, at forty-two, she is united to a gentleman of eighty-four."

A third notice worth recording is this: "Mr. Thomas Dawson, of Northallerton,

aged ninety, to Miss Golightly, a bouncing damsel of sixty-four. The anxious bridegroom had been a widower almost six weeks."

Prior to the present century, the marriage notice in this country announced not only the names of the contracting parties, but their fortunes and virtues. Space prohibits the giving of many of these, and a few must therefore suffice. In 1731 the following notice appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine": "Married, the Rev. Roger Waina, of York, about twenty-six years of age, to a Lincolnshire lady, upwards of eighty, with whom he is to have eight thousand pounds in money, three hundred pounds per annum, and a coach and four during his life only." Four years later this notice appeared in the same magazine: "The Earl of Antrim, of Ireland, to Miss Betty Penfeather, a celebrated beauty and toast of the kingdom."

In the "Gazette," April, 1793, this announcement was made: "On Saturday last, Mr. George Donisthorpe to the agreeable Mrs. Mary Bowker, both of this town."

On the fourteenth July, 1800, a notice appeared in "Aris's Birmingham Gazette" that the Right Hon. Mr. Canning, Under Secretary of State, had been married to Miss Scott, sister to the Marchioness of Titchfield, with one hundred thousand pounds' fortune. Those who wish for further illustrations of these amusing notices can find them in the "Annual Register."

The multiplicity of wives sanctioned by the Bible, at a time when the world required to be peopled, but condemned by the New Testament teaching, is still practised to a larger extent than is perhaps imagined, though chiefly amongst the uncivilised nations. In the East, however, where polygamy has for thousands of years been established, comparatively few men have more than one wife. We often hear of Turkish harems, but the harem is only possible among the ruling class, while the mass of the people are monogamous like ourselves. In the town of Algiers, four years ago, the number of married men registered was eighteen thousand two hundred and eighty two; of these, no fewer than seventeen thousand three hundred and nineteen had but one wife; eighty-eight had two wives; and seventy-five more than two.

There are still a few theorists who justify polygamy on the ground that more women

are born into the world than men, but the theory has long been exploded. August Bebel, in his remarkable work, recently translated into English, shows that in ten States, with a population of two hundred and fifty millions, the excess of females over males was only two million five hundred thousand; and when we remember the extent to which men outnumber women in the Colonies, and the fact that in India there are six million more men than women, the natural inference is that if the inhabitants of the earth were distributed according to the sexes, men and women would be found to exist in about equal proportions.

Recent investigations in Utah in connection with the anti-Mormon legislation, have established the conviction that even among the Mormons the number of cases of polygamy are comparatively few, the majority being content with the second wife in theory, while one is enough in practice. It could not well be otherwise, and amongst the more civilised races natural laws must of necessity prevail.

Amongst some of the African and Indian tribes there is no limit to the number of wives, and the dusky warriors indulge themselves with as many of them as they can afford to maintain.

Probably few old English customs are better known than that of the Dunmow flitch, which, it is supposed, was first given by Robert Fitzwalter, a favourite of King John, when he received the Dunmow Priory some time about the beginning of the thirteenth century. He, however, is not allowed by all to have the distinguished honour, for some there are who incline to the belief that the Monks of the Priory who resided there before Fitzwalter's time, were the first to inaugurate this custom, and meant it more as a joke than a reality. Be that as it may, the custom did once exist, and has been handed down in song and prose from one generation to another, the latter generations having the shadow of the substance which sometimes fell to the lot of their forefathers of loving and domesticated temperaments. The "modus operandi" to be pursued by those who were filled with the ambition to claim the prize of a flitch of bacon, was to present themselves at the Priory and declare that for twelve months and a day after their marriage they had had no cross words with each other, or wished they had not taken upon themselves the matrimonial yoke.

The claimants had to kneel on two sharp-pointed stones in the churchyard, and there, after solemn chanting and other rites had been performed by the convent, take the following oath, which was administered by the steward:

You do swear by custom and confession,
That you ne'er made nuptial transgression,
Nor since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls or contentious strife,
Or otherwise, in bed or at board,
Offended each other in deed or in word;
Or in a twelvemonth's time and a day
Repented not in any way;
Or since the church clerk said Amen,
Wished yourselves unmarried again;
But continue true and in desire
As when you joined hands in holy quire.

Having answered in the affirmative, the Court proceeded to pronounce judgement in these words:

Since to these conditions, without any fear,
Of your own aow you do freely swear,
A whole gammon of bacon you do receive,
And bear it away with love and good leave;
For this is the custom of Dunmow, well known,—
Though the pleasure be ours, the bacon's your own.

In latter days the lucky couple were chaired through the village. The first recorded application was made in 1445, by Richard Wright, labourer, Badbury, Norfolk. In 1467, Stephen Samuel, husbandman, Ayston Parva, Essex, obtained the prize; two years later, it was awarded to Thomas le Fuller, Cogshall, Sussex. Then comes a leap in the records until 1701, when William Parsley, butcher, Much Easton, Essex, was adjudged to have won the coveted prize; at the same time a second gammon was awarded to Mr. Reynolds, steward to Sir Charles Barrington, of Hatfield, Broadleaks. In 1751, John Shakeshift, woolcomber, Wethersfield, Essex, established his claim to the Dunmow flitch. The flitch was again successfully claimed in 1763, by a man and his wife whose names were not recorded. After that, the custom appears to have died out, for in 1772 a John Gilder was unable to press his claim on the Lord of the Manor, for lack of opportunity. In 1851 a man named Harrels applied, on the custom being revived, and was awarded the flitch at a fête in Eaton Park. In 1855, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth revived the old custom; and on the nineteenth day of July of that year, Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, of Chipping Ongar, and the Chevalier de Chatelain and his English wife carried off a couple of fitches. The flitch was again awarded in 1860, and this was the last time the ceremony was gone through. In all probability, it will now be allowed to lapse.

for ever. For one hundred years the Abbots of St. Meleine, Bretagne, gave a similar prize, as did also the Lord of the Manor of Whichenoure.

The first record on the Court roll of the Manor of Dunmow reads as follows :

[Dunmow] "At a Court Baron of Nuper Priorate the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas May, Knight, there holden upon Friday, the seventeenth day of June, in the thirteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, William III., by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, Defender of the Faith, and in the year of our Lord, 1701, before Thomas Wheeler, Gentleman Steward, of the said Manor. It is thus enrolled :

Homage	{	Elizabeth Beaumont,	}	Jurat
		Spinster.		
		Henrietta Beaumont,		
		Spinster.		
		Anabella Beaumont,		
Homage	{	Spinster.	}	Jurat
		Jane Beaumont,		
		Spinster.		
Homage	{	Mary Wheeler,	}	Jurat
		Spinster.		

"Be it remembered that at this Court, in full and open Court, it was found and presented by the homage aforesaid, that William Parsley, of Much Easton, in the County of Essex, butcher, and Jane his wife, had been married for the space of three years last past and upwards ; and it is likewise found presented and adjudged by the homage aforesaid, that the said William Parsley and Jane his wife, by means of their quiet, peaceable, tender, and loving cohabitation for the space of time aforesaid (as appears by the said homage), are fit and qualified persons to be admitted by the Court, to receive the ancient and accustomed oath, whereby to entitle themselves to have the bacon of Dunmow delivered unto them according to the custom of the country.

"Whereupon at this Court, in full and open Court, came the said William Parsley and Jane his wife, in their proper persons, and humbly prayed that they might be admitted to take the oath aforesaid ; whereupon the said Steward, with the Jury, Suitors, and other Officers of the Court, proceeded with the usual solemnity, to the ancient and accustomed place for the administration of the oath, and receiving the gammon aforesaid—that is to say—the two great stones lying near the church door, within the said Manor, when the said William Parsley and Jane his wife, kneel-

ing down on the said two stones, the said Steward did administer unto them the above-mentioned oath—this and the reply of the parties is given above—and accordingly a gammon of bacon was delivered unto the said William Parsley and Jane his wife, with the usual solemnity.

"Examined per Thomas Wheeler, Steward."

At the Abbey of Weir, there formerly hung a fitch of bacon to which was attached the following lines :

Is there to be found a married man
That in verity declare can
That his marriage he doth not rue ;
That he has no fear of his wife for a brew,
He may this bacon for himself hew down.

Let us now look at some of the customs with regard to the treatment and punishment of ill-behaved wives and husbands. In Hampshire villages a custom still prevails, or did a few years since, of serenading a wife-beater with kettles, tongs, and shovels, until he is brought to his proper senses, either from shame or to be rid of the horrid din.

In the counties of Surrey and Sussex a somewhat similar custom was in vogue. When it was known that a man was in the habit of beating the partner of his joys and sorrows, some chaff from the threshing floor was sprinkled in front of his house at night. If this hint, which was well understood, had not the desired effect, all the cow-horns, frying-pans, and old kettles in the village were pressed into service, and the offender serenaded. Between the pauses in the music the following verse was sung :

There is a man in this place
Has beat his wife, has beat his wife ;
It is a very great shame and disgrace
To all who live in this place—
It is, indeed, upon my life.

This invariably produced the desired effect. But where the offender was too hardened, a severe drubbing was administered by the village dames on a dark night and in a convenient place.

In the Ahr-thal, Switzerland, the peasantry get up a "Thierjagen," or wild-beast hunt, comprising a frightful screeching of rough music, when a man is known to have beaten his wife.

In many parts of rural England, Scotland, and Wales, a curious Saxon custom formerly prevailed, called "riding the stang," or "Skimmington riding." In some places the stang was a wooden horse, and in others a simple pole. When a man was known to be under petticoat government,

or when a shrew was known to have belaboured her spouse, a number of villagers would procure a wooden horse or a long pole, astride which, willing or unwilling, a man was placed, and carried round the village. A halt was called before the door of the "vixen," and some doggerel lines were recited, after which, with a loud shout of derision and indignation, the party would salute the mortified inmates; and, unless a trifle of money was handed over, the annoyance would continue for some time. There is, in Llandderfel Church, North Wales, one of these "stangs," in the shape of a nondescript animal. One of the guide-books says that this piece of wood has a place of honour in the pretty church recently restored, and was used for the purpose of frightening married couples who did not live together according to the orthodox Darby-and-Joan fashion. The horse was ridden to their doors mounted on men's shoulders, when a sort of dialogue was gone through, scarcely complimentary to the inmates of the house.

Mr. Askew Roberts, in his quaint and justly popular "Gossiping Guide to Wales," says people confuse the horse of Llandderfel with the "Ceffyl Pren" of Wales and "stang" of England. The more ancient traditions of the horse in question is that Saint Derfel Gadaru, or Derfel the Mighty (a son of Emyr Llydaw), a Saint of the sixth century, was patron of the church, and a great wooden image of him was set up, and pilgrimages were made to it from all parts of Wales. Some say it was placed by the side of the very remarkable animal we have mentioned. The story goes that it had been predicted of this image that it would one day set a forest on fire. Now there was much wood about Llandderfel, and the good folks naturally thought that, if the trees were to be burnt, it would be more profitable that they should be consumed on their own hearth than be destroyed by the object of idolatrous worship. It turning out about this time (1538) that a friar named Forest was condemned to be burned at Smithfield for denying the King's supremacy, they gladly dismounted the idol and packed it off to London, so the poor friar was suspended by his middle to the gallows, which had on it the following inscription:

David Darvel Gatheren,
As sayth the Welshman,
Fetched Outlawes out of Hell,
Now he is come, with spere and shild,
In harnes to burne in Smithfeld,
For in Wales he may not dwell.

And Forest the Freer,
That obstinate lyer,
That wyfully shal be dead,
In his contumacye,
The Gospel doeth deny,
The Kyng to be Supreme Heado.

According to popular belief the "spere and shild" did not go to London, but are still in safe custody at Llandderfel. The image was placed under the friar, and soon fulfilled its mission in the world, the Lord Mayor and the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and other noblemen being spectators. Bishop Latimer, too, was there, "placed in a pulpit opposite to the fire!" and he was preaching while the other was burning, or, rather, trying to bring Forest to a sense of the crime of opposing his religious opinions to those of his Royal master, whom he denied to be the Head of the Church. We believe the relics still preserved consist of a portion of a wooden horse, "Ceffyl Derfel," and a wooden crosier, "Ffon Derfel."

SPRING FLOWERS.

SPRING is ushered in after many different fashions; and often when the temperature is little above freezing, and the wind of the chilliest, there begins some gentle stir that is a sign of the coming life of summer. It is by the river, perhaps, where boats are being overhauled and repaired, where inns and taverns are awakening from their winter's sleep, and fresh paint and bright windows begin to gleam, and signs are furbished up anew. Or, maybe, it is on some strip of waste land, where caravans have been housed for the winter—where merry-go-rounds and swing-boats have kept up a spasmodic festival among the urchins of the neighbourhood—where shooting-galleries are telescoped one into the other, and caravans are stacked, their muslin blinds all yellow with London smoke, and their brass knockers green with deposits of London fog—here and among these a movement of departure is to be seen, suggestive of country fairs that are coming, when the sheep are on their way to summer pastures, and shepherds and leather-legged lookers exchange experience of down and marsh.

In suburban gardens, too, spring shows itself even earlier than in the country; buds are showing green, the willow catkins are out—is not Palm Sunday at hand?—and behold, in Piccadilly, a woman with a handful of these tufted branches. These

were the rustic substitutes for palms in simpler days; but now you may have the real thing from Palestine, in Covent Garden, if your mind is set on ecclesiastical symbols. Everywhere, indeed, in parks, and groves, and gardens, whether really such, or only so many serried ranks of houses under the name thereof, everywhere there are springing grass and newly turned-up mould, and bright margins of gay flowering bulbs expand their blossoms to the meagre sunshine.

Even the soberest and most dignified quarters of the town put on a brighter aspect with the season. Bloomsbury is full of spring blooms. The darker, the more dignified the old red-brick houses, the more striking the contrast with the little pocket conservatories that it is now the pleasant fashion to hang out of dining-room windows. What a glow of refracted sunshine they cast into those more or less solemn and ghostly rooms, where patients sit and wait for their interview with the celebrated specialist—wait for the verdict that may lighten life with fresh sunshine, or take the last hope from the heart that shall never again feel the fresh throb of springtide!

And if the old-fashioned quarters are gay with flowers, the spick-and-span world of new palaces in rows, and squares of towering houses of the latest fashion, is by no means left at all in the background. Rare ferns and costly exotics refresh the eyes of those who are drawn into these fashionable regions, and the grouping and arrangement of window-cases has become an art with its professors and disciples.

There is an old play of Shirley's in which the ladies propose to go and hear the nightingales in Hyde Park. It is early yet for the nightingale; and should such a visitant now appear in our parks, he would be hunted out by the indomitable London sparrow. But what sweet warblings may be heard at Fulham, about the trees and greensward that surround the Bishop of London's Palace! And what a song was that we heard the other day, the ecstatic trill of a skylark in Seven Dials, in a cage hanging from a dusky shop-window, with only a morsel of turf to remind her of the spring! Indeed, it stirs within our hearts, whether we will or no, this renewal of life among dry old husks and withered branches.

And, given a day that is dry and warm, the world in general opens out to the change. With the appearance of the first water-

cart all the chariots and horses of modern Babylon are in evidence. What a jingle of harness and clatter of horses' feet, mingling with the strains of the fiddlers who have established themselves at a street-corner, and the distant resonance of a German band! And the Park, whose green turf is spangled over with crocuses and hyacinths, among which runs the tawny course of Rotten Row. But a week ago, and the ride was almost deserted, and those who used it pounded along determinedly with their shoulders up to their ears; and now there is no end to the cavalcade that pelts along under the trees, with a soft thud of innumerable hoofs; black and white, chestnut, brown and grey, away they go full of pride and corn; and along the rails gathers a line of loungers, their first appearance of the season. The beauties of the season canter past, bevies of young creatures just released from the school-room, and full of the joyous expectation of youth. It is all a thrice-told tale, and yet it is all new once more.

Now, too, we are in the full spring-tide of the conservatories. What a bright show there is under the sunblinds of the florists! how Covent Garden and its neighbourhood glow and mantle in rich colours! Now is the time for the early flower-market, with all its rich and perishable wares. Who will buy all these cut flowers, which together represent a small fortune, and which a day's delay may render worthless?—blossoms from France, from Italy, from Algiers, cartloads of bloom from our own nurseries. And yet dealers are calm and confident. Before the world in general is awake, they will have gone home chinking the money in their pockets, and their precious blossoms will presently be distributed all over the town, at joyous bridal, at mournful funerals, presiding over a thousand feasts, adorning the button-holes of all sorts and conditions of men.

All this brightness and colour in the way of spring flowers is not exactly an affair of unassisted Nature. We are told of the gardener's art that,

This is an art
Which doth mend Nature, change it rather; but,
The art itself is Nature.

The homely-looking bulb that yields such a luxury of colour now, is like a spendthrift throwing forth the hoarded sunshine of years of care. The Dutchmen and the Belgic Gauls who rear them have an hereditary aptitude for the task; they

know the ways of the pretty things, and have no more difficulty in bringing them up than a cat has with her kittens. First of all, cycles of ages were wanted of steady deposition and sediment; great rivers had their way, wide marshes stretched, and sea and land fought for the mastery, till in the fulness of time came the Dutchman and the bulb. They suited the country and the country suited them, and so, whether with tulips, or hyacinths, or lilies, or the hundred-and-one varieties of bulbous plants, it is he who is the master alchemist of the treasures hidden in the bulb. It is a task that requires a Dutchman's patience, too. The offset of a bulb requires some three years' assiduous cultivation before it arrives at or near perfection. And in raising bulbs from seed, which is the only way to produce new varieties, five or six years elapse before it can be put in the market for flowering.

But then all this is a question which ought to be considered in the autumn, when we are buying our bulbs. Everything now says "carpe diem;" let us feast our eyes on colour, and our sense of smell on odours—the first and sweetest of the year. Perhaps, after all, there is nothing to equal the whiff of perfume from a bank of wild violets or from a bed of hyacinths in a copse—the smell of earth, and roots, and flowers, all mixed up in a fragrance that calls up a thousand mingled reminiscences sweet alike and bitter. But if such delights are unattainable, the Crystal Palace is close at hand with a show of spring flowers. The progress there is spring-like, or we fancy it is. The purple hue of coming leafage thickens in the trees; the soft haze of spring is in the air. The boys of Balham are playing cricket on the common; their white flannels look spring-like; the crack of the ball, as a youth drives it over the tree-tops, is as if the last of the iron bands of winter were broken.

Pleasant, too, it is to hear the tinkle of fountains, and music whose resonant echoes wake so many memories. Spring, summer, autumn, and perhaps winter, a day here and a day there, scattered through the years of a life; now parting and now returning, with comrades who return no more, and vanished faces that were once so fair; how the ringing brazen notes recall the mingled, tangled web of it all! But the flowers have nothing to say to us but what is gay and pleasant. Here is all the missing sunshine of life reared up on

stages, and diffusing a glow of radiance on everything around—and a perfume faint yet redolent of all the flowers of spring.

So smells the aire of spiced wine,
Or essences of jessimine.

The hyacinths contribute the sweetest part of the scent—huge trusses of bloom, how far removed in attributes of size and colour from the humble hyacinth of the fields and hedgebanks; and there are masses of colour from cyclamen and cineraria, far outshining anything that full summertime could offer in the simpler days of old, and yet these are but glorified primroses and daisies. The daffodil, too, that was but a common country flower, and yet so well loved, whether by maidens

Tripping the comely country round,
With daffodils and daisies crowned;

or where the feast is spread for dainty Oberon:

Thy feasting tables shall be hills
With daisies spread and daffodils;

or treated in the way of an omen in rustic divination:

When a daffodil I see
Hanging down his head t'wards me,
Guesse I may what I must be;

or regretted as the fleeting emblems of the joys of spring and youth:

Fair daffodils we weep to see,
You haste away so soon;

or prized as the first harbingers of tardy spring:

Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.

And these modest little golden tassels, almost lost in the verdure about them:

Such are daffodils
With the green world they live in.

But no longer such, as they flaunt with many strange names, and in many forms and colours, but all lovely and fragrant. For the flower is now the delight of amateurs and the subject of the florist's anxious care. Only by the drooping head you may recognise the strain of the original Narcissus, the youth languishing away over his own image in the crystal fountain:

But in the place where he did disappear,
Out of ye grounde a lovely flower betrays
His whiter leaves, and visibly did rear
His tufted head with saffron-coloured rays.

Others, indeed, would trace the flower from the East—it is the Rose of Sharon, that appears first among the lilies of the field, with the singing of birds, when the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. For to the lilv tribe belongs Narcissus,

who is own cousin to the beautiful Amaryllis.

In country meadows pearled with dew
And set about with Lilies,
There filling maunds with Cowslips, you
May find your Amaryllis.

But no longer a country maid, as in Herrick's time, but daintily reared in hot-houses, and appearing in bright raiment at spring flower-shows.

Then there is the beautiful wind-flower, the anemone, that sprang up from the tears of Venus as she wept for Adonis. Or, as others say—and among them the great bard of Avon—even from the blood of Adonis himself:

A purple flower sprung up, chequered with white.

The anemone of the woods is now represented by many brilliant varieties. Siberia supplies some, and Japan others: lands which know nothing of the graceful classic legend, and have their own folk-lore as to the origin of this graceful flower. There are blue flowers, white and rose, carmine and purple, scarlet—all sorts of contrasting colours produced by skilful cultivation.

As for azaleas, we value them only for their decorative uses, with their blushing radiance or snowstorm of white blossoms. And then we have the red and white bouvardias, with stephanotis that seems, with all its beauty and fragrance, to be designed by Nature for bouquets and button-holes.

But, in the way of show, what can equal the glow of colour about the tulips?

Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew.

They are like so many tropical birds in the brightness of their plumage, but without perfume, as these are without song.

Bright tulips, we do know
You had your coming hither,
And fading-time doth show
That ye must quickly wither.

Indeed, if one thing strikes more than another in the skill of the gardeners who prepare these bright displays of bloom, it is the bringing to perfection for a certain day, almost for a certain hour, of all these flowers, so shy and unmanageable in the hands of the unskilful. And hence, beautiful as they may be, we do not covet them so much; for as they are at their very best and brightest at this present moment, so they will from now begin to decline. Even now their time has come. As twilight comes on, and the golden sunshine that radiates from the brilliant stages of bloom mingles with the soft light of

the festooned lamps overhead, there begins a general exodus of all the flowers of spring. They are rolled away gently on trucks; men grasp them by the armful and depart, so many glorified Jacks-in-the-Green; tables and stages disappear, and their places are supplied by rows of chairs, which, as fast as they reach the floor, are filled by rows of people who have come to hear the evening concert. And so, with the first note of the overture, adieu, spring flowers!

LEGS.

THE celebrated Swiss clergyman, Lavater, did much towards elevating the study of physiognomy to a science, by the application of certain rules in reading the countenance. In all ages, men have doubtless been in the habit of drawing inferences as to character, from the expressions on the faces of the people with whom they had to deal; and there can be little doubt that much of a man's habits and disposition may be so discovered. We all of us know men whose faces are passports to trust and confidence, whilst there are others of whom we feel an instinctive mistrust or dislike, after one glance at their countenances. Any one who has seen a gang of convicts march scowling along must have noticed more than one whom he could designate, without hesitation, as

A fellow by the hand of Nature mark'd,
Quoted, and sign'd, to do a deed of shame.

Some profess to judge people's characters by their noses; others by their hands and fingers; whilst we have many professors of and believers in phrenology, who have no doubt that a man's character is fully and distinctly portrayed by the bumps on his cranium. Is it then unreasonable to expect the advent of some philosopher, who will bring into scientific order the many signs and tokens of character that are shown in legs? Then we might hope to know what to expect from a pair of bow legs, or from their opposite, the weakly ones, whose knees lovingly approach each other. Then might we perchance be guided, when in doubt, as to shunning the man with a pair of legs like pipe-stems, or accepting the friendship of the possessor of a pair of calves that might excite the envy of every "Jeames" in Belgravia.

Upon the shape and length of the limb, and the way it is set on, depends the walk; and as all these are inherited, and have

been produced by generations of habits and occupations, it is probable enough that with the legs have been inherited the tastes and habits which have gradually given them their form and action. We are not surprised at a son inheriting the character of his father, yet their faces are often very unlike. Any person, however, who takes the trouble to observe, will find that almost invariably father and son are alike in legs and walking. Watch them from behind, and the resemblance in form and action is often ludicrous, so exact is it.

There can be little doubt that the state of a man's mind has an effect upon his walk. The man in a contented frame of mind, with none but pleasing thoughts, walks calmly and steadily along, glancing pleasantly from side to side as he goes; whilst the one whose mind is moved with angry passions moves wildly along with unsteady gait—perhaps, if stirred with violent thoughts of revenge and hatred, sometimes staggering and pushing rudely against passers-by hardly seen by him. Notice the man full of sorrowful thoughts, his eyes cast down, his feet hardly lifted from the ground, shuffling along, almost indifferent as to when or how he reaches his destination. See how the man full of conceit swaggers along, as though he thought the eyes of all men were fixed admiringly upon him. His head may be empty, but a good proportion of self-confidence and impudence, sufficient 'cuteness to hide his ignorance and to make a show of knowledge with a flood of words, a ready lie at time of need, an unscrupulous grabbing of the results of other men's thoughts and ideas, these, with opportunities, may make him a success.

Notice this man, walking with a quiet, stealthy, cat-like tread, knees bending, feet well spread over the ground. He casts furtive glances about him, rarely looking anyone straight in the face. You will not be far wrong in thinking him a sneak, though, if you tell him so, he will some day—long after perhaps—find out some underhand way of punishing you for it.

Another man has what we may call the seven-pound-boot walk. He lifts his feet as though each boot were a heavy dumb-bell, and labours along the street as though striding over the furrows of a ploughed field. He is most probably a man of dull intellect and slow apprehension. A pun, no matter how good, is wasted upon him, and of a witty tale he requires a long and elaborate explanation. at the end of which

he appears to wonder why the tale should be told at all.

Some men of a nervous disposition you may observe hurrying onwards with quick short steps, showing plenty of action, but not getting over much ground. This walk is generally accompanied by a strange nervous action of the outspread fingers.

There is the dainty walker who looks carefully about him, picks out the cleanest places for crossing the road, and invariably carries a spruce umbrella that has the appearance of never having been opened. One can plainly see that with him appearances are everything, and can imagine that an unwonted splash of mud would almost move him to tears. Here comes his opposite, marching rapidly along, straight to his object, careless of mud, indifferent to crowd, crossing roads diagonally, making his way to his destination by the shortest possible route. This is a man bravely self-confident, independent in character, a hard worker, who will get through an extraordinary amount of work, but much of it wanting in neatness and finish.

The belief that the state of the mind influences the walk is expressed in the proverbial saying, "a light heart and a light pair of heels."

Romeo, when going with his light-hearted young friends to mingle with the maskers at Capulet's house, declares that he will not dance, being "too sore empierced with Cupid's shaft."

I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe;
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

Benvolio bids them

Come, knock, and enter; and no sooner in,
But every man betake him to his legs.

To which Romeo replies:

A torch for me: let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels.

And so with quip and jest they enter the house, one (Romeo) to change his old love for a new, and to walk through the path of love to meet despair and death; another, the gay, light-hearted Mercutio, enters to tread a measure which will lead him to the same goal of death through the path of friendship.

We can all picture Shakespeare's whining schoolboy,

Creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.

Observe, in Mulready's painting, the legs of the boy who, coming in late, is received by the master with a bow of withering sarcasm. Are they not sufficient to enable us to enter into his feelings? Do

we not see in them that he is conscious of being made a laughing-stock for the other boys, and that he has a grim foreboding that this ceremoniously polite welcome will ere long give place to a most uncereemonious and unkindly application of "the cut direct"?

The Queen of Richard the Second, when her ladies propose to drive away thoughts of care by dancing, replies :

My legs can keep no measure in delight,
When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief.

Compare the brisk walk of the man of business, as he hurries through the streets of the City, with that of the loungeur at the West End. To the one, time is money; every moment is of value; and even if it is not, he must make it appear so for his credit sake. To the other, time is of no consequence. He is like Charles Lamb, in his *Superannuated Man*, "perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from."

It appears to us that jail-birds—men accustomed to exercise in a prison yard under the sharp eyes of a warder—mostly acquire a certain kind of hang-dog, shuffling walk. Some of them, in old days, must have possessed a peculiar walk such as Falstaff alludes to when speaking of his recruits: "Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for, indeed, I had the most of them out of prison."

Without committing ourselves to his opinion, we may here recall Charles Lamb's quaint description of the tailor's walk: "Observe the suspicious gravity of their gait. The peacock is not more tender, from a consciousness of his peculiar infirmity, than a gentleman of this profession is of being known by the same infallible testimonies of his occupation. Walk that I may know thee. Do you ever see him go whistling along the footpath like a carman, or brush through a crowd like a baker, or go smiling to himself like a lover? Is he forward to thrust himself into mobs, or to make one at the ballad-singer's audiences? Does he not rather slink by assemblies and meetings of the people, as one that wisely declines popular observation?"

Tom Hood was profoundly just in his estimation of human nature, when he supposed that if the trunk and limbs of man were shared out allegorically amongst the passions,

Whichever might claim the head, or heart,
The stomach, or any other part,
The legs would be seized by vanity,

and he illustrates his idea by a fop who

Lost some inches clear
By looking down at his kerseymer,
Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,
Till he got a stoop in his shoulders,

so that

Try him wherever you will, you find
His mind in his legs, and his legs in his mind.

The elder Disraeli tells us that Charles the Seventh of France introduced long coats to hide his ill-made legs, and that shoes with very long points, full two feet in length, were invented by Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Anjou, to conceal a large excrescence on one of his feet.

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, the steward Malvolio is induced to walk into the trap prepared for him, by an appeal to his vanity concerning his legs. The letter dropped in his path by the arch waiting-maid Maria, which caused him to make himself ridiculous before his mistress, contained one sentence that tickled his vanity: "Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered."

To see a man careless about such things has always been considered a sign that he was suffering from great perturbation of spirit. Hamlet, when he pretends to be mad, appears before Ophelia,

His stockings fouled,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle.

The "Spectator," on this subject of vanity as to personal appearance, says:

"There's Squire Lath, a proper gentleman of fifteen hundred pounds per annum, who, if it was as much more, would freely part with it all for a pair of legs to his mind; whereas in the reign of our first King Edward of glorious memory, nothing more modish than a brace of your fine taper supporters; and His Majesty, without an inch of calf, managed affairs in peace and war as laudably as the bravest and most politic of his ancestors; and was as terrible to his neighbours under the royal name of Longshanks, as *Cœur de Lion* to the Saracens before him."

Henry the Fifth, before the battle of Agincourt, boasted of the legs of his soldiers when he said to the French herald, Montjoy:

My people are with sickness much enfeebled;
Who when they were in health, I tell thee, herald,
I thought, upon one pair of English legs
Did march three Frenchmen.

The event of the battle certainly far more than justified his boast. His soldiers showed that English legs were more likely

to stand up against a foe than to fly from him; and that they were worthy descendants of the race that produced such men as the gallant Witherington at Chevy Chase, of whom the old ballad says :

For Witherington needs I must waille,
As one in doleful dumps ;
For when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumps.

It is doubtful if there are many men who are not satisfied that either for size, or shape, or proportion, they have the very pair that come as near the proper thing as can be expected of poor human nature. Some men derive an additional satisfaction when they bestride a bicycle, from the fact that they can then wear the knee-breeches, the hose, and the low shoes which they fancy set off their neat limbs; others are delighted with the gallant appearance they make in a Court dress, with its necessary well-fitting silk stockings. We must allow that the exceptional man who has the right to invest his leg with the Royal insignia of the Order of the Garter, may be justly proud of it. Some hunting men have many anxious moments concerning the "natty" appearance of their "tops;" and we know that even the celebrated founder of the Pickwick Club derived additional lustre from his gaiters. Probably, in days of old, the "curled darlings," when selecting their outfits for the next campaign in France or Scotland, or for their coming season with the Crusade, were as anxious about the "set and appearance" of the greaves which were to protect their knightly shins, as any young officer of the present day is about the brilliant boots in which he is to ride in the guard of honour or to march past at the review.

We are unable to say what were the feelings of the offender in the last century whose legs were invested in the village stocks; but although he might consider it a bad investment, he may have found some cause for boasting in their being stronger, or handsomer, or more comfortable than the stocks of the rival village.

So strange are the things upon which men pride themselves, that there may even be convicts who take delight in the particularly coloured hose bestowed upon them by a watchful and paternal Government.

Perchance the owner of a specially constructed expensive artificial leg looks down upon the possessor of an ordinary cork one, who in his turn despises the common wooden appendage. We are told that the rich Miss Kilmansegg, when, in consequence

of her accident, an artificial leg became necessary,

Flatly and plump
She spoke, in the spirit olden;
She couldn't—she shouldn't—she wouldn't have
wood!

Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,
And she swore an oath, or something as good,
The proxy limb should be golden!

One aspect of vanity connected with legs is the pride some people take in their walking powers. It is astonishing what distances some of our friends cover when they go for a "good country walk"; although at times, upon a rigid comparison of the places visited with the Road-book, their "must have been quite twenty miles" often proves, much to their chagrin, a bare dozen. Doubtless, to one unaccustomed to walking the distance traversed seems much greater than it really is, especially if there has been little to attract attention or enliven the road. A pleasant companion shortens the road wonderfully, and cheerful spirits are of great assistance in a pedestrian tour. As Autolycus sings :

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile—a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile—a.

In nothing, perhaps, is good walking of more importance than in war. Napoleon, by his rapid marches, repeatedly disconcerted the schemes of his opponents; and the Prussians defeated the Austrians in their last struggle as much by their rapid marching as their valour. In the Franco-Prussian war, too, the swift and well-combined marches of the German hosts conduced greatly to their success. Our own island has been the scene of many a warlike march. The Roman soldiers traversed the country from end to end, leaving us a splendid legacy of roads. Danes, Saxons, and Normans, in their turn, took their "walks abroad" in our little island. The civil wars, too, were the occasion of many military promenades through our quiet villages.

The warlike Bolingbroke, who, landing at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, marched his troops across country to Wales, gathering friends and allies as he went to meet the hapless Richard, was reproved by his uncle, the Regent York, in the words :

Why have these banish'd and forbidden legs
Dared once to touch a dust of England's ground?
But then more why; why have they dar'd to march
So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,
Fighting her pale-faced villagers with war?

Many such warlike marches occurred in the civil wars that followed, and it is little

more than a century since our land has been free from them. How long we may continue in our blissful security, however, depends greatly upon whether the spirit of Ethelred the Unready, which seems of late years to have inspired our rulers, shall give way to one of manly determination to hold our own, to do no wrong and suffer none. Let us hope that the time may soon come when a man shall not be sneered at for preferring the interests of his own country to that of others; when maudlin sentimentality and namby-pamby shall give place to a national spirit of patriotism, and Englishmen shall think of England first and party afterwards. Then may we say with the brave Falconbridge:

Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us
rue
If England to itself do rest but true.

A LONG RECKONING.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

PART II.

AFTER that night I had a kind of feeling towards the Welshman as if he belonged to me in part, and I made chums with him very thick, and told him exactly how I stood with my girl, and all the money I'd saved, and we were often together; but I didn't let any chum or anything else stand in the way of my courting, or keep me from carrying my three half-crowns every Saturday night to be put away in the bright-red stocking Agnes had knitted for our house-keeping money. Sometimes I took her half a sovereign, and then she'd tell me what a good lad I was.

"Zekiel," she'd say, "there ain't such another about here as you, for stiddyness and sticking to a thing. Why Dandy, with all his gimcrack ways, isn't a patch upon you."

Which I well believed.

Once a quarter Agnes and I used to count up what we'd got and, when it came to twenty pound—as it did by the end of that year that Dandy was next door to drowned—I made so bold as to say:

"Now, my lass, what's to hinder us having the banns put up, and being married in time to keep Christmas as man and wife?"

She hung back, as girls will, and made pretence about her mother, and the lodgers, and one thing with another; but I was very pigheaded on the matter, seeing I was

dead set on getting my own way. So I talked her down at last; and it seemed she wasn't sorry that I wouldn't let her have the last word nor give her any peace till she told me I might take our names to the parson, and have us cried in church as wishing to enter into that state of life which seemed likely to be pleasant to us.

Obadiah says I am putting the catechism wrong way about, and wants me to say something different; but I shan't do any such thing.

Now Obadiah had better try to tell you how light-hearted I went to work the day after I'd been to the parson about our banns, and how I whistled and sang along the gangways till I came to where my work was. I had to shut up then, for it takes all a man's wind to work among heavy coals as I was doing, and you can't play no tricks with inattention neither. Still, I'm free to own that my head was full of something else all that morning, and, every time we ran our trucks to the shaft, I wished I was going up along with them that I might see how Agnes looked with the prospect of being married so close ahead.

I little thought that before knocking-off time I should be taken up the shaft with my face and neck scorched and blasted into the ugly mug you see before you; taken up without any more consciousness of what was being done to me than a man has when he's taken to his grave.

How it happened I can't tell you. There was, no doubt, explanations in the newspapers for those that can read; but all I know about the explosion that blowed my head nearly all to pieces, is, that I saw a sudden glare of light rushing up the gangway we were in, and, before I could turn to run, the flash seemed to fly round me, bringing a dull roar and a wonderful cruel pain with it. Then I felt as if I was falling, falling—where to I couldn't tell; only I listened for the bang which should tell me I was dead and done for, and I can't recollect when and how I left off feeling and hearing.

When I came to myself, I knew I was in a hospital by the sounds and the feel of the bed. Otherwise I was in darkness, and the same cruel pain was gnawing at my head and shoulders, which had come with the fire in the pit. I felt awfully scared, and when I called out my voice was just like a little child's. I tried to ask how much had happened to me, and if I should be well by the time our banns were asked out.

"You're very badly burnt, my lad," the doctor said, when he heard me. I needn't have had him fetched to tell me that. I knew it a precious lot better than he did, only just then I couldn't have said so.

"I can't tell yet about your eyes; but I hope you will not lose your sight. We shall be able to see in about ten days' time."

"And when do you think I shall be able to get about, sir?" I asked, all of a tremble.

"Oh, in about six weeks, if you go on well," he said, quite cheerful; and then he bustled off and left me to my own calculations, which were anything but cheerful.

I wouldn't wish my worst enemy a worse lot than to be forced to lie, as I did, with my face all done up in bandages, and only a bit of a hole left to breathe through, wondering, as I did, if I should ever come out of that aching darkness—to lie sleepless for pain, with one face always in my mind, with one voice always in my ear, one cruel disappointment always bearing down on me, and one impatient longing in my heart. Obadiah will have to be a clever chap if he is to find the right words to tell this part.

Sunday was the day in that hospital when a patient's friends might come in and see him; but the doctor and the nurse between them settled that, if anyone came for me, they should not be allowed into the ward, lest talking should put me into a fever, and do me harm. Perhaps they knew best; but I thought just the opposite, and I would have said so, only doctors are such unreasonable chaps when they've got a poor chap like me to argy with them. So whether Agnes came that day, as I felt sure she would, I didn't know.

The next Sunday, when I was better and might have been allowed a sight of her, she didn't come. I fancied, perhaps, she had been put out at having had all that long tramp from Birch Bank for nothing; so I got the nurse to write a letter from me to tell my sweetheart I wasn't going to be blind, but that my burns would take a long while to heal; and I asked the nurse to break it very gentle that my face would be scarred awfully, and most likely drawn on one side. I wanted her to know, so that she shouldn't be shocked, and I begged her to come over soon, so that she should know exactly how much and how little of my good looks had been left to me.

A few days after the nurse brought me an answer and read it to me. "Zekiel," she said, "it's a bad job you've been knocked about so bad. I hope you're

getting on all right. I can't come on Sunday, the days are so short now, and it's a long way over to Barnaley. I've been and stopped our banna. Job Wilkes was killed when you was hurt. So no more at present, from your loving Agnes."

"So it's no use for you to look for visitors, Zekiel," the nurse said.

"No, it ain't, worse luck," said I; "but all the same, she might have let the banna be asked out."

My accident was a long job to mend, partly, I think, because the doctor and the nurse argued so dreadful about my poultices; but perhaps fretting threw me back, for I felt as if I had no encouragement to get well. I was always making out reasons for my girl staying away, and thinking hard is bad for a feverish wound. Certainly twelve miles is a long way for a lass to make shift to come, when there's lodgers and one thing or another at home to hinder her.

However, sick men get well in the long run, when they don't die—which perhaps is not the worst way out of a hospital ward—and at last I found myself in the carrier's cart on my way home to Birch Bank; and, as was natural, I began asking questions about them as I hadn't seen for close on three months. The carrier was at the best reckoning but a grumpy fellow. He had a way of shamming deaf when he didn't want to talk, and that day he wouldn't hear a word. But old Mother Alcock, who used to keep the "Blue Gun" by the bridge, was more ready for a bit of a chat.

"La! bless me! Zekiel Walters," she called out, "who'd have thought it was you? Why, you've that changed with them scars about you, that I shouldn't have known you if you hadn't said who you were."

I wasn't much put out by that, for I was glad to be going home again, scars and all.

"Well, Mother Alcock," I gave her back, "you're getting old and off it; but, perhaps, some as is younger than you will have better memories and sharper eyes."

"Perhaps they will, and perhaps they won't, Zekiel. In course I don't know who you're counting on, but I warn you you'll find some changes at Birch Bank, as certain as your own face is changed. You've been away three months: that's a goodish bit out of a year."

"Well," I said, getting curious, as she meant I should, "if there's any news worth telling, let's have it to shorten the time this old mare takes to let the grass grow under her feet."

"There's plenty worth telling, and one bit you might think worth listening to, for it's about that tall girl with the dark hair and the turned-up nose—that girl you used to keep company with."

My father gave a great jerk, and I felt scared—the more so because I saw the carrier looking at me out of the corner of his eye, as if he wanted to see how I took what was coming. "Go on," I says, short and sharp.

"Well," answers Mother Alcock, "you know that red-headed chap you was chums with: him that was near drowning last winter?"

"Yes," I says again, and my heart went harder still. "You mean the Welshman, Dandy Davies—a rather unstiddy chap."

"Unstiddy or not, I can't say. There was some as found his good points, for Mason's Agnes took to him very soon after you got hurt, and last week they got married and went away out of the place."

The first thought I had was that Mother Alcock, the spiteful old creature, was telling me a pack of lies, just to pay off an old score that lay between us, so I tried to laugh, and said she'd come to the wrong market with that story. Then she flared up sharp, and said: "All right. I'm telling you what ain't true; you'll find your lass at the cross roads waiting for you, I dessay. Good-night to you;" for we had come to the bridge.

But Agnes wasn't at the sign-post, and she wasn't along the road, nor standing in the doorway, nor looking out of the window; and why not make a long story short, since you have heard what Mother Alcock had to tell me?

When I found she had really played me false, all for the sake of that lying Welshman; that she had really gone, and left me no word to break the blow when I should come home, looking for a welcome from her; when I found that her mother could tell me next to nothing of how they had managed it, nor where they had gone to—for it seems they had kept it all as dark as possible—nor what had become of the twenty pounds I had saved, then I spoke up and I cursed them with all my might, and I swore a solemn oath that sooner or later I'd settle my reckoning with Dandy Davies, because I had not left him to die like a dog in the water before he had robbed me, and bested me, and left me homeless and penniless, and broken-hearted.

I've often wondered if any young fellow

of four-and-twenty ever had a harder trouble to bear than that great trouble of mine. It would have been bad enough to be bound to carry about to my dying day these scars of that terrible danger and pain. Even if my girl had been true to me through thick and thin, as she'd often promised to be, I should still have had my share of trial to pull along with me; but when, over and above that which couldn't be cured, I found that I had no one to look kindly into my seamed face and bleared eyes, I don't think it is much wonder, that from that day forth, my one wish was to follow up Dandy, to seek him high and low till I found him, and, wheresoever I found him, to punish him for the wrong he had done me. I didn't fix in my own mind exactly what that punishment should be, but I used to dream of him lying helpless in my clutches, looking at me with begging eyes, and calling out my name in a feeble voice as he'd called that night when I saved his life for him—which was the worst day's work I ever did.

It may be easy for people who can read and write to find anyone they are in want of, or for those who don't mind saying who they are after, and the reason why; but, you see, I couldn't read nor write; and as to making enquiries which might lead to talk, I wasn't going to thwart my heart's desire by putting Dandy Davies on his guard against me. It was very much like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay to go tramping the country from one colliery to another, asking after a red-headed Welshman named Davies. Time after time I thought I was on the right track, and time after time I was disappointed. There were lots of Welshmen to be found, and lots of them were carrotty, and lots of them answered to the name Davies; but when I ran them to earth there was none of them Dandy; and one summer and winter slipped away after another, and I grew older and sulkier, and my bill seemed to get heavier because the settling had been put off so long. I didn't try to forget my troubles, I nursed them up, thinking of scarcely anybody or anything else. And what with my mopy ways and my short manner of speaking, and the ugliness of my face, there wasn't a man, woman, or child in the world who cared whether I was happy or unhappy, or ever gave me a second thought.

I can scarcely say how long this luckless chase had gone on, when once, as I was on the tramp near Birmingham, I met with a

navvy who said he was sure he knew Dandy Davies, and that he was working at a coal-pit on Cannock Chase. It didn't seem a very likely story, for according to this navvy, who was a Welshman too—that was how we came to talk so free on the subject—Dandy had risen to be quite a “boss,” and might walk up and down all day long without so much as dirtying his hands. This I couldn't altogether believe—it didn't seem possible that such an unfair thing should happen—yet I couldn't help following up the trace to see what would come of it; so I took my ways to Cannock Chase.

To look at, it was much the same kind of country as the moor-side where I did my courting, and had the bit of happiness that came and went so quick. But the collieries were mostly new thereabouts, and had a look of not belonging to the place, as if they had dropped down from the sky, or sprung up from underground. But wages were good there, and it was the finest place in England for cock-fighting and dog-fighting, and the Chase was full of all sorts of wild game to tempt poaching. There were a lot of new, stony roads about the coal-pits—roads without hedges or fences; and there were rows of new, bare-looking, badly-built houses standing at haphazard, some facing in one direction, and some in another; they all had an untidy, shiftless look about them—of broken glass stuffed with rags, and piles of broken bricks and rubbish by the doors. It wasn't the place to 'tice a man to live in, and yet hundreds of families had gathered together there, so that quite a town had grown up all dirt, and disorder, and neglect, in no time.

I got there on a Sunday afternoon, and after I had had a glass of beer in a public at a corner of one of the bare black roads, I began to look for a lodging. I wasn't so hard to please then as I am now, so I can't say why I went a good bit around without settling where I would have a shakedown. However, something did keep me going on, and still looking about in an undecided way, up one dirty row of houses and down another. At last I came to a house standing endways to the road, a little tidier than the rest. There was the word “Lodgings” up in the window, which is a sign I can make out without reading, and which perhaps wouldn't have caught my fancy if I had not seen a little lad perched on the wall of the yard. At the sight of him I pulled up short, and felt as if I'd been hit

between the eyes. He had red hair, which curled very close round his head, and as he turned his face to look who was coming, I saw that every feature of it was line for line and measure for measure the likeness of that man I had looked for high and low. The moment I saw him I lost all my doubts. I knew I had found Dandy at last; yet I felt more startled at my certitude coming to me in that way, than if I had come across Dandy himself quite unexpected. For a time I stood staring and dumb, and might have stood longer if the youngster hadn't spoken up, as cool and impudent as possible—which was the manners of children in those parts, beyond anything to be found elsewhere.

“Who be you?” he said; “and what are you after?”

“Is this your house, young 'un?” I asked him, sharp enough, for the look in his face made me long to have my fingers at somebody's throat. He didn't answer my question.

“By gum!” he said, “you have got a queer face! it's all crooked so as I never see a face before.” And he jumped down from the wall and ran to the door. “Granny,” he called out, “just you come here; here's the oogliest chap you ever seen by the gate. I reckon he'll be after no good.”

I had a natural wish to thrash him well for his impudence; but I put on the break and waited to see what his granny might be like.

“Good evening, missis,” I said, when she showed at the door.

“Good evening,” she gave me back, quite civil.

I saw that she had a look of Dandy about her; but I might not have noticed it if it had not been for the boy.

“You lets lodgings, missis?” I asked.

“I do—that is, I have room for a single man.”

“Which I am; and in wants of some place to turn in, if so be we can square matters.”

“Well, that depends on whether you're quiet and orderly, and not given to evil ways like the most about here. I don't belong to this country-side, so I can't say I'm ashamed of it, but I ain't going to have any drinking and gambling in my house, for I'm a respectable chapel member.”

She screwed up her mouth as she spoke with a tightness that gave promise of hard times for the man, woman, or youngster that she felt crusty toward. If I hadn't had my reasons for doing otherwise, I

should have said, "Good evening, missis," and gone on further; but I had reasons, which grew on me the more I looked at the child peeping out from behind her. So I knuckled under, and made more promises about decent, sober conduct than she'd any right to expect me to keep, and then I followed her into the house.

"Is this little 'un one of yours, missis?" I said, while she was getting me some bread and cheese.

"He's my son's," she said, "and the eldest of five."

"Does your son live along with you?" I asked. I couldn't help it, let her take it how she would; but she took it well, and was ready to talk.

"No," she said; "he lives close to the North Cannock pits. It's handier for him. He has to be on the place early and late."

This she said as if she was very proud of him.

"Why early and late, missis? Can't they get along without him?"

"Not so well as with him. My son's a very dependable man, and them as employ him knows the value of him, I'm glad to say."

Which didn't altogether match with what I knew of Dandy, and made me doubt that I was on a wrong track.

After that I ate my bread and cheese without talking, though I should have liked to ask some more questions; and she bustled about and got on her bonnet and shawl.

"Come you here, Jimmy," she called out to the youngster. "Come you here and have your face washed; it's time to go to chapel. What'll your dad say if he misses you from preaching?"

She had to give him two or three cuffs by way of persuasion before she could manage to get him ready. Then off she went, dragging him along. I stood by the garden gate trying to smoke a pipe and think matters over; but the pipe wouldn't keep alight, and, as to thinking, I scarcely dared, lest I should be making too sure of what wasn't quite proved yet; and why shouldn't I go, there and then, and see if it couldn't be proved?

So I strolled across the common in the same direction as my landlady and the little chap had gone, and presently I came to a red-brick building, out of which I could hear a noise of hymn-singing, as if four or five score voices were trying to raise the roof up. I'd never been in a place of that sort before; but I put my pipe in my pocket and slipped in through

the door just as the hymn came to an end. The pulpit was opposite the entrance, and some one was standing up in it as if preaching time had come.

Now, mark you, I went into that chapel, feeling sure that, if I was on the right track, I should run Dandy to earth there. I went prepared not to look startled or to tremble, or to utter a word of surprise, if I should find myself sitting on a bench shoulder to shoulder with him; but all I had made up my mind to counted for nothing when my eyes lit on the man, who stood in that pulpit, with his hands upraised, and, looking down on the chapel full of men and women—me among them—said: "My brethren, let us pray." I turned that giddy that I had to cling on to the back of the seat in front of me, while I took another good look. It was so terrible hard to believe that I had found Dandy Davies at last.

By the time I came to a full knowledge of what was going on the sermon was in full swing. The preacher's voice was getting louder and louder, and he was hitting out with his arms till the sweat stood on his forehead. The folks were groaning and moaning as if he was hitting them, and every here and there some one would cry out, "Hallelujah."

I whispered to the man next me:

"I say, guv'nor, who's the chap that's holding forth?" Not that I had anything to learn, but that I wanted to hear what he'd say.

The man looked hard at me:

"I suppose you're a stranger, else you'd know that it's Master Davies, the 'butty,' from North Cannock pits."

"And what for does he preach?"

"Because he's got a call to, as you'll soon hear if you listen."

But I didn't want to listen. I'd rather have stood up and told them that were listening so eager what sort of man they were listening to; but since I daren't do that, I got up and walked out of the chapel, and away across the Chase, till night fell, and the ground grew chill and damp, and lines of mist spread over the hollows like grave-clothes over a corpse.

Before that week was over I was working in the North Cannock pits, in the gang that Mr. Davies, the pious butty, employed for the North Cannock Company.

* A butty collier is a small contractor who undertakes certain work for certain prices under a company, and employs and pays his own men.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 961. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VI. CONTRASTS.

ADRIAN LYLE found that delicate-scented note awaiting him, when he came home from a round of pariah duties to his midday meal.

The clear, graceful writing, the subtle, faint perfume, brought its writer before him with almost startling distinctness. He remembered the exquisite face; the dark, mocking eyes; the sweet, vibrating voice; and thought to himself, "She is Gretchen's rival, and a dangerous one. I must watch how matters go between herself and Kenyon."

With that end and purpose he found himself in the beautiful, old, oak-panelled dining-room that night, one among a very small circle of guests who had arrived that day at the Abbey.

Keenly as he watched, he could detect no signs of secret understanding between Neale and his cousin. Lovely as a dream, and bewildering as a puzzle, Alexis Kenyon aroused his interest and enchained his attention, almost against his will. She was so graceful, so animated, so audacious, so cool, so changeful in speech and expression, that she certainly made a picture of original womanhood, baffling and entertaining him at one and the same moment.

There were two other ladies of the party—one young and lovely, one middle-aged and clever. A celebrated statesman; a young and talented artist, who had leaped at one bound to fame and success; and a cynical and somewhat eccentric author, for whose works Alexis

had a great admiration; completed the party.

The party was brilliant and well assorted; but Adrian Lyle noticed that one and all paid involuntary homage to the young hostess; that her keen and graceful wit, and delicate ironies kept the ball of conversation flying with startling and bewildering rapidity. He did not wonder that her father was proud of her; that the devotion and worship of his kindly nature were so self-evident and so excuseable. But it seemed to him that Kenyon displayed an almost nervous horror of his clever cousin. He was silent, absent, uncomfortable. He spoke but seldom, and never by any chance took part in the brilliant dialogue that sparkled round the flower-laden table.

Adrian Lyle himself was rather a listener to, than a participator in, the conversation. He thought his lovely young hostess charming, as a woman of the world; further than that his thoughts did not go at present.

He would have been surprised had he known that those brilliant eyes of hers noted every shade of expression on his face; that she could have described the shape of his head, the broad, sweeping wave of hair tossed so carelessly back from the grave and kindly brow, the whole power and strength and gentleness of the face that was at once so impressive and attractive.

Almost against her will, Alexis Kenyon was conscious of noticing and remembering these things; of feeling that this man's presence had brought a new element of interest into her spoilt, capricious life. That sense of power and strength, of firm will and gentle nature which Adrian Lyle conveyed, was to her something novel and, as yet, attractive. She could not understand why, or

how, he conveyed all this to her. Their acquaintance had been brief; they had scarcely exchanged a dozen sentences to-night; but Adrian Lyle's individuality stamped all he said, and lingered in her memory long after wittier and more brilliant words had faded into forgetfulness.

"He does not like me," she thought to herself, as she rose from the table at last. "I wonder why."

A little sense of amusement crept into her heart, and something, too, that was very like pique and annoyance. It was so unusual, so surprising to find herself no more than any other woman in the eyes of a man, and a man, too, in whom she had condescended to feel interest.

The great drawing-room was dimly lit by rose-shaded lamps. The windows were open on the terrace. The pretty girl, who was a skilful musician, went up to the open piano and began playing a dreamy, tender melody of Schubert's. Her aunt, Lady Breresford, who was one of Alexis Kenyon's rare favourites, seated herself beside her young hostess near the window.

"Who is your new friend?" she asked. "Clerical, is he not?"

"Yes," said Alexis; "a curate. He does not look like one, though."

"No," said Lady Breresford. "He has an air of great dignity. He impresses one with a sense of power that is withheld for occasion, so it seems to me."

"Perhaps," said Alexis coolly, "the occasion will arise. Bishops have been curates once."

"It is a new element for you to introduce," remarked Lady Breresford. "You have always professed dislike for Church dignitaries."

"But he is not a dignitary—yet," she answered, and gave a little yawn, and looked out at the clear June stars with a bored and somewhat listless expression. "I think I will go out on the terrace," she said, rising. "Will you come?"

"Thank you, no," laughed the elder lady. "I am beyond the age of moonlight and illusions, and I see no use in courting neuralgia. I will remain here, and listen to Fay."

"Fay's music is delightful," said Alexis, standing midway between the window and the terrace on which it opened, while she wound a delicate lace scarf round her shoulders. "But I can hear it quite as well here, and I do not suffer from neuralgia."

"Nor from anything else," said Lady Breresford, looking somewhat curiously at the delicate face that was as perfect as a cameo in the moonlight. "Not even a headache."

Alexis laughed.

"No, that least of all. I can't imagine such a thing. I believe it is a poetic nickname for boredom, spite, or indignation."

"I hope," said Lady Breresford, "you may never find it anything else. You have caused it often enough to fear retribution."

Alexis only smiled, and moved slowly away. As she did so, the door opened and the gentlemen entered. It did not in any way surprise Lady Breresford that one and all looked round the room, as if in search of someone whose absence made itself instantly apparent.

She left her seat, and laughed good-humouredly:

"Miss Kenyon is out on the terrace," she said, and watched the general movement towards the window with evident amusement. "What is it she does to them?" she thought. "She never cares. Perhaps it is just that."

Her niece left the piano and approached. Neale Kenyon suggested that they should follow the general exodus, and she assented. Sir Roy and Lady Breresford alone remained in the drawing-room.

The group without met, spoke, and separated into twos and threes. It surprised Adrian Lyle somewhat to find himself walking along beside the spoilt and wilful beauty, nor was he quite aware how it came about.

"What a lovely night!" he said, pausing involuntarily under the white and radiant moonlight, which showed the whole extent of the gardens and park. "I don't wonder at your coming out here. It seems a sin to sit indoors."

"Yes," she said. "One sacrifices a great deal to conventional duties. It is very foolish."

"This is a perfect place," said Adrian Lyle, his eyes wandering from point to point of the beautiful grounds. "You ought to be happy as its mistress."

"Do you think I hold it 'par droit de roi'?" she asked, laughing. "I assure you I do not—only by a very insecure tenure; indeed, I have often wondered my father never married again. He might do so still."

"When he is so entirely devoted to you! I scarcely think it."

"I don't believe in entire devotion," she said. "It is one of those phrases one uses because they sound well ; but it conveys a great deal more than is correct."

"You believe in very few things, I fancy," said Adrian Lyle, looking gravely and critically at the pale, lovely face, to which the moonlight lent additional purity and beauty.

"Very few," she agreed tranquilly. "I have proved their worth too often."

"A melancholy truth. Perhaps you judge too rapidly and too hardly."

"I judge," she said, "as I find things and—persons. Of course, one can imagine them charming, if one wishes. I like to look beneath the surface."

"So do I," he said, smiling involuntarily. "And have you found nothing, and no one to stand that test?"

"As yet, no. I believe there is no such thing as a perfectly sincere person in the world."

"That is a sweeping accusation," he said calmly. "Sincerity, you know is not always flattering, and probably you have often turned aside the blunt edge of a truth by your own fascination. Do you expect everyone to say what they think? I fear society would not turn on such smoothly oiled hinges if that were the case."

"Society!" she echoed scornfully. "Oh, how sick I am of the world! It has sounded in my ears since I could walk alone. Sometimes, I think I will leave the world altogether and enter a convent."

"I would not," he said, "were I you. The heaven of your discontent would affect a wider circle than it touches at present, and perhaps do more harm."

"Do you mean," she asked quickly, "that the fault lies with me?"

"I mean," he answered gently, yet rebukingly, "that when there is so much real sorrow, poverty, distress, and want in this poor work-a-day world of ours, it seems rather foolish to quarrel with an existence so perfectly conducive to happiness and content as yours might be."

"Might be? Yes. I have all the attributes of happiness, I know ; but the reality—well, I have either no capacity to grasp it, or else it has a wider meaning than social success, a well-arranged household, or more admiration than is perhaps good for a woman. You see I am very frank. Can you read the secret of my discontent?"

"I should imagine it lies with yourself."

"I think so too, but that does not solve the problem of its existence. I have everything—therefore I am content with nothing, Can you suggest a remedy?"

"It would be a harsh one," he said, "and one that you would feel little inclined to follow. I should say, be more true to the natural instincts of womanhood ; give your feelings more play, and your intellect less ; look into the sufferings and necessities of humanity from a personal, not an abstract point of view ; try to feel, instead of to analyse ; expect less, and give more. I think you may be more disturbed, but you will certainly be less dissatisfied."

"To become that," she said coldly, "you would have to alter my whole nature ; then I should cease to be myself, and it would not matter very much if I were happier or more contented. You cannot deny that life is intensely monotonous and extremely ill-balanced ; it has either a surfeit of sweets or sours : the one wearies, the other hardens. I suppose weariness is the easier burden of the two."

"Miss Kenyon," said Adrian Lyle, almost severely, "your sophistries may be very clear and sound very pretty to men and women of the world, but to me they ring hollow, as base coinage would. I don't know the cant of society, I don't wish to know it ; but when a woman, young, beautiful, clever, and beloved, tells me that she is utterly dissatisfied with her lot, and utterly unable to find one good or true note in the vast music of humanity, she tells me a thing which I cannot believe, and for which I can give her no sympathy. The fault lies in herself, to my thinking, not in the world that she blames."

For a moment, a sense of outrage, of indignation, of intense and aroused pride held Alexis Kenyon utterly speechless. Never had anyone dared to so arraign her actions, or speak such scathing rebuke. The very truth of Adrian Lyle's words cut through the threads of her cynical philosophy like a sword that severs flesh and bone. A sense of utter worthlessness, a bitter, shame-faced humility, shook her serene and scornful nature, and for one hateful moment bowed her to the dust before the first man who had dared to tell her the truth.

Then the feeling passed. Her imperious blood took fire. Wounded and incensed, yet too proud to show how deeply his words had cut, she turned her great luminous eyes upon Adrian Lyle's face.

"You are certainly sincere," she said.

"No doubt the fault does lie with me; but, like most of your profession, you are quicker to blame than to suggest a remedy."

"In your case," he said, "I should not be so bold, though it lies almost at your door, would you condescend to seek it."

"I understand," she said, with her little chill smile, "you would like me to play Lady Bountiful—become ministering angel to the parish by way of making myself acquainted with real sorrow and necessities. I have tried it, and I assure you it did not interest me in the least. Sorrow is very egotistic, and necessity very in-odorous. I can't say they taught me any higher truths."

He looked at her with something that was almost scorn in his grand grey eyes. How mean, how pitiful, how insignificant she was in those eyes at that moment, even she felt apparent.

What he might have said she never knew, for at that instant Neale Kenyon and his pretty companion paused beside them. The young man had noted the long tête-à-tête, and had grown more and more uncomfortable at its duration.

"Are you preaching a sermon, Lyle?" he asked, with a little uneasy glance at his cousin's grave face and flashing eyes; "or trying to convert Alexis? Don't. It's time wasted, and she'll never be grateful for the attempt."

"I am not making it," said Adrian Lyle, calmly. "We have been discussing generalities."

"Let us go in and have some music," suggested Neale. "The dew is falling, and it grows chilly."

Instinctively he approached his cousin, leaving Adrian Lyle beside pretty Fay Breresford.

"Come in and sing, won't you?" he asked persuasively. "You haven't once done so since I came back."

She took his offered arm. He thought she looked strangely pale and cold in the clear moon-rays.

"Yes, I will sing," she said with such meek acquiescence that her cousin was startled.

He did not know how fast her heart was throbbing, what a tumult of anger and futile disdain was thrilling in those beating pulses.

"Perhaps that will move him," she thought, for she had proved again and again the magic of a voice trained to perfection.

She sang that night as she seldom or never sang, for it rarely happened that she desired to please any special listener. Yet this listener was unmoved, to all appearance, and his courteous thanks were as cold as thanks could be.

"You do everything well," he said, "when you take the trouble."

She looked at him. A faint flush wavered over her fair face, her great eyes were brilliant as stars.

"There is not much trouble about that," she said, glancing at the music she still held. "And I wonder you do not say it is only another display for the purpose of gratifying vanity."

When she had said the words she was sorry. They displayed pique, and she would not for worlds have him think that anything he had said had wounded her.

He smiled a little.

"Some successes," he said, "are never monotonous. A talent such as you possess is as capable of giving pleasure to others, as of gratifying yourself."

"Are you fond of music?" she asked suddenly.

His eyes flashed.

"I love it," he said. "It is my one weakness—if I may call it so."

"I thought you did not possess even one," she said tranquilly. "May I ask if you sing also?"

He looked a little disturbed.

"Yes, I sing," he said; "but not in drawing-rooms, or to fashionable audiences, and not ballads."

"I never supposed so," she said, as she tossed her song down on the piano. Then looking softly at him she said: "Will you favour me—not the audience! They are going to play cards. I should like to hear you."

For a moment he hesitated.

"I have not sung for a long time," he said at last, "and I have no music. The excuses sound conventional, I know; but they are quite true. Still, if you wish—"

"I do wish it very much," she said, leading the way to the piano. "Will you accompany yourself?"

"If you will allow me," he said; and he took his seat at the instrument, while the group at the further end of the room drew together round the card-table.

She seated herself on a low chair, a little to one side of him, but where she could see his face. What she expected she hardly knew, only that it seemed to her

that the man could do nothing by halves—nothing imperfectly.

He struck a few chords almost at random. Then his voice rang out—clear, full, sonorous—in the “*Salutaris Hostia*” of a Mass he had heard and learnt in Rome.

The card-players dropped their cards in amazement, and turned as by common consent towards the singer. Alexis herself sat there quite still—scarcely breathing. She had never heard such a voice. It swept over her senses like a charm, rising in wonderful diapason clearer, and sweeter, and higher, perfect in melody and enunciation—seeming to breathe all that was most lofty and divine in the longingsoul to that dim and far-off Being it worshipped. Then slowly, softly, reluctantly, the rich, soft notes died one by one away—the last chord echoed on the breathless silence.

He rose. For a second their eyes met, and in that second it seemed to her that all the littleness, all the arrogance, the petty vanities and selfishness of her life faced her, and held her shamed and silent.

Then something that was base and cruel leapt into her heart, and set her better feelings in savage and furious revolt.

Why should this man of all men make her feel so small and so contemptible? Even that one talent on which she prided herself, and which he had praised, he had swept into insignificance now. She rose, and something hard and defiant was in her face as she said coldly: “Your singing, Mr. Lyle, is too perfect for my poor thanks. I have never heard such a voice—off the stage.”

He bowed gravely and turned away. Neale Kenyon was close beside him.

“How magnificently you sing!” he exclaimed eagerly. “I have never heard anything like it—never since I was in Venice. Do you remember—?”

He stopped abruptly and crimsoned to the roots of his hair. Adrian Lyle gave him a warning look. His own face grew pale and disturbed. Alexis noted the exchange of glances—the sudden gravity and coldness of Adrian Lyle’s face.

“There is some mystery about that friendship,” she thought to herself. “It shall go hard with them if ever I find it out.”

THE FOLK-LORE OF MARRIAGE.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART IV.

STILL continuing the research after punishments awarded to those who failed

to make the best of affairs of this life, it will be found that in Leicester, in common with many other places, they were ducked in the river; and there is still preserved in the museum of that town a “cucking chair,” in which these wives were seated while undergoing the punishment. Rough music to the scolds was the custom of some villages. So recently as 1860, at a village in the South of England, when a man was shut out of his house by a termagant wife, the boys and young men dressed up an effigy of the woman, imprisoned it in the pound for a time, and then burned it before her door.

Brand, in his “History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne,” states that in the time of the Commonwealth scolds were punished with the “brank.” Plot, also, in his “History of Staffordshire,” describes the “brank” as having been used at Walsall and Newcastle-under-Lyme. In the museum at Oxford one of these curious articles is now exhibited in an excellent state of preservation; and from the number of instances found of them, they must have been in common use, although there is very little mention made of them in any law book. The Ashton parish “brank” is still at the parish offices. This “brank” was a sugar-loaf-shaped cap, made of iron hooping, with a cross at the top, and a flat piece projecting inwards to lay upon the tongue. It was put upon the heads of scolds, padlocked behind, and a string annexed by which a man led them through the town. This form of punishment appears more recent than the “cucking stool.” The whirlingig was formerly a very common punishment for trifling offences by sutlers, brawling women, and such offenders—a kind of circular wooden cage turning on a pivot, and when set in motion whirled round with such amazing velocity that the delinquent soon became extremely sick.

An old writer says of the same punishment: “The way of punishing scolding women is pleasant enough. They fasten an arm-chair to the end of two beams, twelve to fifteen feet long, and parallel to each other, so that these two pieces of wood, with their two ends, embrace the chair, which hangs between them upon a sort of axle; by which means it plays freely, and always remains in the natural horizontal position in which a chair should be, that a person may sit conveniently in it whether you raise it up or let it down. They set up a post upon the bank of a pond or river, and over this pond they lay almost ‘in

equilibrio' the two pieces of wood, at one end of which the chair hangs just over the water; they place the woman in this chair, and so plunge her into the water as often as the sentence directs, in order to cool her immoderate heat."

Leaving punishments and penalties for a time, I find that it is a custom, and a very good one too, among certain tribes in Siberia, that, when a woman is married, she must prepare the wedding dinner with her own hands. To this feast all the relations and friends, both of her own family and of that of the bridegroom, are invited. If the viands are well cooked, her credit as a good housewife is established; but if the dishes are badly prepared, she is disgraced for ever. The result is that a Siberian wife is generally a good housekeeper.

Something akin to this custom was once formerly practised in rural places. Formerly when the process of pancake-making was commenced in a household—usually at about eleven o'clock—the domestics of the place assembled to engage in the art of "tossing the pancake," as the idea was entertained that no woman was qualified for the connubial state without being skilled in the art.

A parliamentary decree under Louis the Fifteenth of France solemnly enacts "that any female person found guilty of enticing any of His Majesty's male subjects into the bonds of matrimony by means of red and white paint, perfumes, essences, artificial teeth, false hair, high-heeled shoes, etc., shall be indicted for witchcraft, and declared unfit for marriage."

One of the laws of Connecticut formerly decreed that "no man shall court a maid in person or by letter without first obtaining consent of her parents. Five pounds penalty for the first offence; ten pounds for the second; and for the third, imprisonment during the pleasure of the Court."

In our own country, several centuries back, every woman marrying was to pay to the King, if a widow, twenty shillings; if a maid, ten shillings.

Amongst ecclesiastical punishments meted out to married men and women at the ancient Archdeacons' Court, we find one man bringing judgement upon himself for "marieing his wife in their parish church in her mask;" and another for "that the day he was married he dyd blowe oute the lightes about the altar and wolde suffer no lightes to bourne." A third was punished for "not treating his wife with affecion;"

and another "for cheening his wife to a post and slandering his neighbours." A woman was dealt with for "comynge to be churched without kercher, midwife, or wyves," or not "as other honest women; but comynge in her hatt, and a quarter about her neck."

Madame Greville tells us that in Russia women are not regarded as the equals of men. "The peasant," she says, "expects his wife to plough, to harvest, to work like a beast of burden. This would be comparatively nothing if they were well treated and loved. Their husbands do love them, but in a peculiar fashion. For the first two or three days after the wedding, things go on very well, that is, while the families are exchanging their visits. After that, the husband beats his wife; and, if he does not beat her, she thinks it is because he does not love her." In support of this, Madame Greville quotes the following instance: "Once, when I was there, a girl who had been married only ten days came to me with her mother and begged me to use my influence with the newly-made husband. They wanted me to make him beat the girl, according to her situation as a wife. It was a long time before I understood the reason. I found that it was founded on jealousy. If a husband is not jealous, he does not beat his wife; and if he is not jealous, he does not love her."

In olden times there was a popular notion termed "marrying to save life"—that is to say, it was believed that a woman, by marrying a man under the gallows tree, would save him from execution. The origin of the belief is lost completely. Barrington, in his "Observations on the more Ancient Statutes," says: "This vulgar error probably arose from a wife having brought an appeal against the murderer of her husband, who, afterwards repenting the prosecution of her lover, not only forgave the offence, but was willing to marry the apeller." In Chastelain's "Chronique des Ducs de Bourgogne," (1837), it is recorded that in 1468 "Hernoul, son of John de la Hamaide, lord of Haudion and Main, Vault, cruelly murdered a citizen because a canon, the brother of the murdered man, had given an adverse decision on a disputed point at the game of tennis. Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, caused Hernoul to be arrested, and swore that he should die for his crime. In spite of the most powerful intercessions, Charles adhered to his resolution, and at the time when Bruges was

crowded with visitors to witness the arrival of Margaret of York, sister to our Edward the Fourth, Hernoul was led out to be executed." Chastellain, a contemporary and an eye-witness of this exciting scene, informs us that the criminal was "bound on a cart with cords, and dressed as richly as if he were going to a wedding. The cart was followed by a great crowd, and numbers of women who, to save his life, besought and entreated that they might have him in marriage." Hernoul was, however, hanged in due course.

In a little village in Somerset, the following curious tradition is told respecting the origin of a well-known Druidical monument existing there, and consisting of four groups of stones, which, when complete, formed two circles. Many hundred years ago, on a Saturday evening, a newly-married couple, with their relatives and friends, met on the spot now covered by these ruins to celebrate their nuptials. Here they feasted and danced right merrily until the clock tolled the hour of midnight, when the piper (a pious man) refused to play any longer. This was much against the wish of the guests, and so exasperated the bride, who was fond of dancing, that she swore with an oath that she would not be balked in her enjoyment by a beggarly piper, but would find a substitute, if she went to the lower regions to fetch one. She had scarcely uttered the words when a venerable old man with a long beard made his appearance, and, having listened to their request, proffered his services, which were right gladly accepted. The old gentleman, who was none other than the arch fiend himself, having taken the seat vacated by the godly piper, commenced playing a slow and solemn air which, on the guests remonstrating, he changed into one more lively and rapid. The company now began to dance, but soon found themselves impelled round the performer so rapidly and mysteriously that they would all fain have rested. But when they tried to retire, they found to their consternation that they were moving faster and faster round their diabolical musician, who had now resumed his original shape. Their cries for mercy were unheeded, until the first glimmering of day warned the fiend that he must depart. With such rapidity had they moved that the gay and sportive assembly were now reduced to a ghostly troop of skeletons. "I leave you," said the fiend, "a monument of my power and your wickedness to the end of time." So saying, he vanished.

The following incident connected with marriage is so unusual that it seems well worthy of record: Thomas Coke, first Earl of Leicester, married his first wife on October the fifth, 1775; his son, the present Earl, married his second wife on August the twenty-sixth, 1875. There was thus an interval of one hundred years between the one and the other event. It is extremely doubtful if such another incident has occurred—certainly not in the Peerage.

I must now conclude these articles with a short notice of a horrible superstition which prevailed to a considerable extent in India.

Formerly Hindoo women, on the death of their husbands, performed what was known as "suttee"—that is, they immolated themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands, and so secured a happy entrance into the region of the blest. This barbaric custom was encouraged by the priests, and was a regular occurrence until the conquest of India by the English, since which time only few cases of suttee have taken place. When it is known that the sacrifice is contemplated, the authorities step in promptly and rescue the unfortunate fanatic from the untimely death which superstition and priestcraft prompt her to seek.

Mr. Edwin Arnold, in his letters on "India Revisited," says: "Parvati's Hill (Poona), with the renowned temple on its summit, overlooks the 'Diamond Garden.' A long and winding flight of spacious stairs leads up to it, so gradual that mounted elephants can quite easily carry visitors or pilgrims to the platform of the goddess. Half way up the ascent is seen a stone memorial of a Sati (suttee), with the usual footmarks engraved, which show that a Hindoo widow here immolated herself. The bright-eyed Brahmin lad who conducts us points to the spot with pride, and is astonished to learn, when he speaks half-regretfully of the abolition of this antique rite of self-sacrifice, that it was never in any way common in India, the instances of Sati not amounting in any one year to more than eight or nine hundred. The unselfish and perfect love which could make a woman forego life for her husband, was never so particularly common, that, even in India, every city furnished a Hindoo Alcestis once or twice a week, as seems occasionally supposed.

"Here however, was, at any rate, a place where one such great-hearted wife—believing the Shastras which promise union in

heaven with the dead man, and as many lakhs of happy years with him as there are hairs upon the widow's head—here was the spot where some Hirrabae or Gungabae gave her gentle life to the flames, undeterred by heaped-up wood and lighted torches, unrestrained by the beauty of this Deccan prospect, which stretches, fair and fertile, to Sivaji's distant fortress peaks. It was not very wrong, let us hope, to lay a flower upon the carved stone which recorded when the Sati, the "Excellent One," had last set her fearless foot upon this earth of selfish hearts and timid beliefs. The words in the "Hito Padesa" came vividly to my mind :

When the Hindoo wife, embracing tenderly her husband dead,
Mounts the funeral pyre beside him, as it were a bridal bed ;
Though his sins were twenty thousand, twenty thousand times o'er told,
She should bring his soul to Swarga, for that love so strong and bold."

PASSION WEEK IN VIENNA.

WHY is Vienna called the wickedest city in the world ? Did its inhabitants, in far-back ages, perpetrate some deed of unparalleled atrocity, or is it to the envious malice of enemies that it owes its opprobrious title ?

When I was staying there, I often used to ask this question, for if the name of the city had been the gay, the hospitable, the beautiful, the musical, I could have understood it ; but why the wicked ? The Viennese themselves do not seem to know, and, what is more, they do not seem to care. One of them assured me, with a shrug of the shoulders, there must be in everything a superlative, so in wickedness too, and why should not Vienna bear the palm ? I must confess, however, that I noticed no signs of rampant wickedness in the Austrian capital ; on the contrary, it appeared to me the brightest and happiest town I had ever seen.

I suppose the Viennese do work sometimes, but where or when I could never discover. The Ring, an immense boulevard which completely surrounds the city, is, from early morning until late at night, filled with a gay, chattering crowd—such a crowd, too, as can be seen nowhere else in Europe. There the Tyrolean looks at you, from under his broad-brimmed hat, with those large, dark eyes which seem fraught with untold misery. By his side may be walking a Bohemian ; an honest,

steady-going citizen in reality, though fiction chooses to despoil him of his virtues. Judging by his soft, cooing dialect, you might be led to think he was always relating some piteous, heart-breaking tale ; even his laughter is tinged with melancholy. Then little knots of Hungarian soldiers, glittering in silver and pale blue, wander up and down, taking the whole world into their confidence as their shrill voices ring through the air ; whilst Greeks and Croats, Transylvanians and Bosnians, all in native dress, with those subtle touches of brilliant colouring which Eastern nations seem intuitively to know when and how to use, lounge about in picturesque groups, which stand out in bold relief from the tall, grey buildings around.

Life in Vienna is as brilliant and varied as the dress of its natives. One amusement follows another with a never-ending rapidity. Nor is pleasure-hunting confined to one class or age ; rich and poor, young and old, throw themselves into it with a hearty vigour which is most delightful ; the very babies in the street, as if moved by some common impulse, dance all day.

I once happened to be in Vienna in February, and, as Easter fell early that year, remembering that I was in a Roman Catholic country, I was prepared to find that the whirl of gaiety, in which we were living, would be brought to a stand-still by Lent. But, to my surprise, far from this being the case, balls, theatricals, concerts, and every form of amusement were more numerous and brilliant than ever. The Sunday before Easter Day was a kind of gala at the opera, and up to that time there had been no break in the rush of dissipation. That night, however, when we were going to bed, I noticed a strange, wistful look in the face of my hostess, for which I was at a loss to account ; and the next morning when I came down to breakfast, I saw a change so startling that, for a moment, I could scarcely believe my eyes. My hostess, whom I had never known to appear before eleven, was at the head of her table, punctual to the moment for the nine o'clock breakfast. But was it really she ? Where were the thousand little curls, ends of ribbon, flutters of lace, with which she was wont to be adorned ? She, the most fashionable and elegant of ladies, appeared to have undergone some strange transformation ; for, sitting there, she was for all the world like the Lady Abbess of some convent. Her hair was plainly

brushed behind her ears without a sign of ripple or curl; a black dress, of the simplest description, hung straight to her feet; chains, earrings, brooches, had all vanished; a linen collar and a huge chaplet were the only attempts at ornamentation. The very expression of her face, too, was changed. A sort of preternatural solemnity seemed suddenly to have descended upon her. Nor was it upon her alone: her husband, although the alterations in his dress were necessarily less apparent, had undoubtedly undergone some subtle change since the previous night. Nay, the very servants were metamorphosed, and moved about in silent gloom, as if some awful fate either had overtaken them, or were just on the point of doing so. There was a lack of food, too, on the table; all the tempting little French dishes were gone, and in their place was a loaf of bread. I could not imagine what it all meant, but, as my friends said nothing, I felt it would be indelicate to intrude upon their sorrow. At length, feeling the silence too oppressive to be endured, I enquired if we were going to the theatre that night. If I had enquired whether we were going to commit murder, they could not have looked more horror-stricken.

"Oh, no; how could we!" they both exclaimed.

More mystified than ever, I looked from one to the other, and, in sheer despair, asked, "Why not?"

"We never indulge in worldly frivolities during Passion Week," was the reply, given in a compassionately reproachful tone, such as I can imagine Miss Ophelia might have used when remonstrating with Topsy.

My friends spoke the truth. "Indulge in worldly frivolities!" I should think not. Indulgence of any kind would be the last thing to be associated in my mind with the week that followed.

But, as I soon discovered, the whole of the Viennese, as well as ourselves, had changed their manner of life. Not a visitor approached the house; if, in the street, you saw anyone whom you knew, he or she hurried past without a word, evidently bent upon some errand of charity. Everyone had cast aside feathers and plumes, and flitted about in mourning garments, with a penitential expression of face. Clearly the Viennese held with the text, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" for I noticed that those who had valued most vigorously were the most diligent in their devotions. In

fact, it was as if some vast revival of religious fervour had suddenly seized the whole population. Involuntarily I thought of the days of Peter the Hermit, or Savonarola, so completely did the people seem to be under the influence of an all-powerful emotion.

In other days I had spent hours wandering about in the fine old Cathedral and the innumerable churches of which Vienna boasts, and it was a rare chance if I had not found them empty. On Sundays, even, you might often have counted the congregation on your fingers; but now all that was changed. Every church was crowded. Service succeeded service without intermission, and yet there never seemed to be enough. Not only was the Cathedral all day, from early morning till late at night, packed with people as closely as it would hold, but a crowd surrounded the door, waiting to take the place of those who were inside.

Numbers of Father Confessors were sent up from the country, but even then the supply was far from equalling the demand. People, who for months before had never entered a church, must now confess every day. It was an hour of triumph for the priests, and they used it to the full. Some of the sermons I heard at that time were perfect masterpieces of fierce invective. One of the preachers—a Trappist, I think—a tall, gaunt, haggard man, with shaggy, grey locks and wild-looking eyes, might have been an Elijah addressing Jezebel's Court, with such unflinching boldness did he hurl reproaches at his hearers. And they literally grovelled before him. Courtiers, Ministers, officers, the greatest aristocrats in the world, hung upon his words as if he had been a god; and the more roughly he treated them, the more popular he became.

For the beggars this was of course a time of rich harvest; they had only to sit still, and coins, for which they scarcely deigned to thank the giver, were hurled down upon them. The blind, the halt, and the lame were hunted up and loaded with gifts. It was amusing to see how completely these people fell in with the spirit of the affair, and acted up to their parts. Everything was inverted—it was the beggars who kindly condescended to accept what was given, whilst the rich were properly grateful for being allowed to give.

The Court takes the lead in all these demonstrations of piety. The Emperor and the Empress on Holy Thursday kneel

down, and whilst the former washes the feet of twelve old men, the latter renders the same service to twelve old women. Of course, after that, the courtiers feel that no work can be lowly and humiliating enough.

By the end of the week, most Viennese present a rather ghastly spectacle. Fasting with them, as I can bear witness, is no empty form; they go in for that, as for everything else, with all their hearts and souls. The more frivolous they have been for the rest of the year, the more they are bent upon enduring unparalleled torture during this week. Not only is the food provided simple, and indeed almost coarse as to quality, but it is strictly limited as to quantity; the result being that, in a few days, the more delicate among the Viennese are in a state of prostration. We all know the piteous looks of the poor—of those who in their lives have scarcely known what it was to have sufficient food—but this expression is quite different from that of people who, after revelling in every luxury, suddenly begin to practise austerities. These seem to go down at once, physically and mentally—spiritually, of course, they are supposed to develop unheard-of strength—their flesh hangs upon them loosely, and their eyes become almost wolfish in their eager brightness. It is quite painful to see some of them.

From Monday morning to Saturday night, fasting, penances, and austerities of every kind, went on steadily increasing in severity. At first, I had looked on with wonder at the power of endurance of this pleasure-loving race; but soon my wonder had changed to fear, as I did not see what was going to be the end of all this unwholesome excitement. However, my anxiety was groundless; for, on Easter Sunday morning, I was greeted by another change, which, though scarcely less startling than the first, set my mind at rest.

Curls, ribbons, laces, and all the rest of it had reappeared as suddenly as they had vanished; once more, the table was groaning beneath its weight of dainty luxuries; once more, merry laughter and gay nonsense were ringing through the air; for the Viennese, with light hearts and consciences at rest, were renewing their old frivolous life.

The one short week, into which they had striven so valiantly to force a year's devotion, had come to an end; and with it the triumph of the priests, the harvest of the beggars: the churches having assumed

their wonted mournful air, stood empty, and so would stand until the wheel of time again brought round the sacred week.

At every turn in the old Kaiserstadt you come across reminiscences of the past. Vienna has been besieged times without number: twice it was captured by the Turks; twice by the French; perhaps it is the memory of this disgrace that makes old St. Stephen's and the Burg (where the Emperor lives) frown down upon us so gloomily. In the corner of the square in which the Cathedral stands, there is still to be seen a grim memorial of a quaint old custom. Wedged in between two handsome modern shops, is the trunk of an enormous tree—"der eisene baum," the iron tree, as it is called—into which thousands and thousands of nails have been driven; so many, in fact, that not a morsel of wood is to be seen. It appears that, in mediæval days, it was the custom when any son of Vienna was leaving his native town, for him to go, accompanied by his friends and relations, and drive a nail into the "eisene Baum." If the traveller ever came back, his first visit was to the tree, when he commemorated his safe return by driving a second nail by the side of the first.

London may be proud of its Park, Paris of its Bois, Berlin of Unter den Linden, but not one of these can compare with Vienna's Prater. It is impossible to conceive of anything more beautiful than some parts of this much loved resort of the Viennese.

The Prater begins close to the town; but at first, it is merely a well-trimmed garden, with itinerant musicians, pretty casinos, tiny coffee-houses, comfortable chairs and benches—in a word, another Champs Elysées. But as you make your way up the broad road, you soon leave behind you all these signs of cockney civilisation, and find yourself in perhaps the noblest avenue in Europe. It stretches for miles; on either side are tall lime trees and stately chestnuts, which have stood there for centuries. This is the main drive, which is always thronged with carriages; but shady walks and winding paths branch off at the sides, for such as wish to escape the crowd. As you go farther and farther from the city, the avenue becomes more narrow, less even and well kept; then it ceases to be an avenue at all, and turns into narrow lanes which lead you for miles through wild forest lands, remote from all signs of human habitation.

On the first of May is the Prater-Fest, when all Vienna, with one accord, turns out for merry-making. At twelve o'clock the Empress, in an open carriage drawn by six horses, starts from the Burg at the head of a grand procession. After her come the Court, diplomatists, nobles, and citizens, all in their smartest array. But the procession does not end here, for Vienna, city of the Hapsburgs though it be, is at heart democratic; therefore everyone who for this occasion can beg, borrow, or steal carriage, cart, or wheelbarrow, joins the Empress's cortège. Fishmongers and greengrocers, laundresses and applewomen, all are there, happy as the day is long, like one great family, and, for the nonce, all men—and women too—are equal. The procession, often two or three miles long, passes through the town to the Prater, up the right side of the broad avenue and down the left, the Empress, whose beauty time cannot dim, always leading the way. Grandmother though she be, she is slight and upright as a girl, whilst with her glorious eyes and perfect features, she rivals the fairest young débutante in loveliness.

The smallest little street urchin in Vienna knows the story of this Empress, the beautiful Elizabeth. Nearly half a century ago, the Herzog in Baiern (for such was his title) was informed that for his eldest daughter, the august destiny of Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary was reserved. Now money was scarce in the ducal palace, but the whole family felt that, at any sacrifice, the little Duchess must be fitted for her future greatness. The Emperor was in no hurry to marry; so, for years, half the income of the Duke was devoted to the education of his eldest daughter. At length, just when teachers and professors were united in declaring that their duty was accomplished—for their charge was perfection—the Emperor came down to the little Castle at Tegernsee, to visit his betrothed, of whose perfections he had heard such rumours. But, alas! for the plans of mice and men! The Emperor was but three-and-twenty; and, untouched by the stately beauty and queen-like bearing of his destined bride, he fell madly in love with her younger sister Elizabeth, the family Cinderella, who, like a little savage, had passed her days scouring the country-side with her brothers, whilst her sister had been trained to courtly ways. The Emperor, in spite of all arguments, prayers, and entreaties, insisted

upon marrying the one whom he loved; and thus Elizabeth, upon whom no thought or care had been bestowed, who knew no more of courtly forms and etiquette than many a peasant girl, became Empress-Queen; whilst her accomplished sister, the unfortunate Caroline, married the King of Naples, who in a few short years was driven from his throne.

AMERICAN TORNADOES.

PUBLIC attention has been, of late, so repeatedly directed to quakings of the earth, that twistings and twirlings of the air, after receiving passing notice, have almost fallen into oblivion, a state of things which, however, can only be temporary. As they have already occurred, so they will recur again, as long as the same causes and conditions exist in ocean, earth, and air; and their effects and ravages are too singular and serious for it to be possible to regard them with indifference.

The strange phenomena attending these atmospheric commotions, and the diverse opinions entertained respecting their origin, have induced M. Faye, the eminent French astronomer, to make a special study of the tornadoes, amounting to the unlucky number of thirteen, which rushed over certain regions of North America on the twenty-ninth and thirtieth of May, 1879. The result of his investigations, and the conclusions they suggest, form the subject of a lucid "Notice Scientifique" in last year's number of the "Annuaire of the Bureau des Longitudes," a few of whose statements and convincing arguments we take the liberty of giving here.

Why should tornadoes be fiercer and more formidable in the United States than anywhere else? That is one of the first questions to suggest itself. Four hundred and sixty-seven destructive tornadoes have been recorded there between 1875 and 1881. The ruin they have caused naturally gives to meteorological questions in America an importance, which is far from being felt to the same degree on the European continent.

By its situation on the globe, the territory of the United States is first crossed by the tempests which have afterwards to traverse the Atlantic before reaching us. The United States are therefore the place where their direction and velocity ought to be studied. It is from the United States that their coming is announced to

us several days before their arrival—a considerable service which we cannot reciprocate, because no tempest ever travelled, nor ever will travel, in the opposite direction, by starting from Europe and reaching America.

Two opposite and contradictory theories exist respecting the violent commotions in the atmosphere, which are known to us by the name of tornadoes.

One of these theories—which corresponds to the popular belief that water-spouts pump up water from the sea—attributes their cause to vast currents of heated air rushing upwards from the ground towards the clouds. The other theory assigns the cause of tornadoes to aerial whirlpools and eddies, which, originating in the upper regions of the atmosphere, stretch downwards till they reach the soil. The first theory is supported in America by the authority of Franklin and other great names; the second is the one which M. Faye maintains to be the true explanation of the phenomena, and which, we may say, he has fully proved.

First let us take the doctrine of "aspiration" by tornadoes, or of their sucking or drawing upwards things lying on the ground. This theory supposes a lower stratum of warm, moist air to be rising in the atmosphere. While so mounting, it expands, cools, and abandons a part of its moisture, which takes the form of a cloud. It then again becomes warmer, in consequence of the heat disengaged by the condensation of its vapour. Being therefore lighter than the surrounding medium, it will continue to mount. On reaching a higher region where the air is rarer, it will again dilate and afterwards cool, thereby giving up another portion of its moisture; and so on, until the process is repeated as far as the limits of the atmosphere.

According to Mr. Espy, the inventor of this theory, the ascending column of air would cause a sucking or draught at its foot, much as happens in a chimney at the base of which a fire is always burning. But here we fail to discover any reason either why the ascending column of air should move onwards in one direction or another, or why the said column of air should rapidly revolve or spin from right to left. Nevertheless, these are two essential characteristics of tornadoes.

Now what constitutes a tempest is precisely the violence of the rotatory movement of the air. If a ship, driven by a

cyclone, runs before the wind, every navigator knows that, carried away by the rotatory impulse, it will successively experience winds blowing from every point of the compass. It will even perform several revolutions round the centre of the hurricane. Famous instances of this fact might be quoted; but our aspiratory theorists will not allow it. The ship, they say, will be driven to the centre, namely, into the region of central calm, and will there remain. Equally unexplained is the rapid movement of translation, or motion onwards, by which every cyclone and every tornado is propelled, rivalling the pace of the fastest express train.

Now, in matters of this kind, a theoretical error may have serious consequences. It was not by meteorologists that the laws of cyclones were found out. They were discovered experimentally, independent of any hypothesis, by navigators. They especially establish the rule that in cyclones the movement of the air is sensibly circular; whence comes precisely the very name of "cyclone." Our "whirlwind" expresses the same idea; and on this circularity are based the rules for handling a ship in case of tempest.

Evidently it will make a great difference in the working of a ship whether it be commanded by a meteorologist or a sailor. It was to avoid such dangers that M. Faye undertook, in 1875, to explain to the world the true Law of Storms,* and he has since then studied the tornadoes of the United States, because the traces of the wind's action were there inscribed, not on a ship's log-book, but on the soil, by the wrecks of houses, of trees laid prostrate, of walls and fences thrown down. In these cases doubt is not possible; material proofs refute meteorological theories.

The doctrine supported by M. Faye identifies cyclones and tornadoes, from a mechanical point of view. Both resolve themselves into a purely rotatory movement, propagated from the top downwards, with the sole difference that the spirals of the tornado, much more proportionally contracted than those of cyclones, when in contact with the ground, revolve with a rapidity greater than that of the most violent storms. In fact, the gyrations of a tornado at its lower portion attain, or even surpass, half the initial velocity of a musket-ball. It is manifest that a gigantic

* See "Storm Laws," ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. xiv., p. 246.

screw, though consisting of no more solid substance than air, spinning round at such a rate, cannot fail to commit incalculable damage.

A cyclone embraces a vast area of the earth's surface within the circuit of its influence; a tornado's effects are restricted within quite narrow limits on each side of its onward progress, although throughout the whole length of its course the tornado may continue its devastations so long as it remains in contact with, or touches, the earth. If it hangs in mid air without reaching or brushing along the earth, no disastrous effects are produced. A cyclone is a giant of enormous power, who may break up towards the close of his career, into several tornadoes. A tornado, comparatively a dwarf, is endowed, nevertheless, with incredibly concentrated violence and fury.

It is useless for theorists to maintain that tornadoes are ascending currents which mount from the ground to the clouds. Eye-witnesses on the twenty-ninth and thirtieth of May, who were present at the commencement of the tornadoes, one and all saw them descend from the clouds. Mr. Eddleblute, for instance, first noticed the Stockdale tornado in the form of a narrow shred of a cloud, like a rope hanging down from the sky. Soon it began to descend, reaching the ground sixty rods to the south-west of his house, stripping masses of turf from the meadow, and crushing rails over an extent of thirty feet in breadth. Beyond this circle of thirty feet no harm was done, nor was any violent gust of wind felt. Half-an-hour afterwards, Mr. Condray perceived it rising and falling alternately. It was then passing over an elevated plain or table-land. Arrived at the edge of the declivity, it furiously attacked the tops of trees, but did not yet touch the ground. Shortly afterwards, it fell upon Mr. Condray's house and partially destroyed it.

The Delphos tornado also began with numerous little waterspouts dangling, like so many whip-thongs, from the clouds, subsequently uniting in one single whirlwind, which performed a portion of its course with its lower extremity still up in the air. It reached the woods fringing Saline River, Ottawa, but only spent its force on the tops of the trees, merely stripping off their leaves. It thus passed over several houses without touching them. At last, between Saline River and Salt Creek, it reached the ground, destroying Mr. Disney's house and doing other damage.

About five in the afternoon of the thirtieth of May, the inhabitants of Wakefield remarked in the south-west a threatening cloud like an elephant's trunk. For a while, its extremity remained above the ground, but reached it on the elevated plain, close to Wakefield. At Waterville the tornado began, at the junction of two streams of clouds, by an arm or protuberance of the thickness of a tun descending to within a hundred feet of the ground, then rising and descending again alternately. But it did not touch the ground till the mouth of the Little Blue River, where it destroyed Mr. Sawyer's house. After passing the Big Blue River, it rose and remained at a considerable elevation in the air, continuing its course to the north-east as far as Elm Creek, where it disappeared—doubtless in the clouds, for no more was heard of it.

The same happened with the Lincoln County tornado; the same with the Barnard tornado, whose ravages were so terrible, and which also rose in the air at the close of its devastations. Moreover, almost all tornadoes, in the course of their destructive effects, dance or rise and fall vertically. They mount and travel onwards without their lower extremity touching the ground, then sink down again, repeating the movement several times. It is a remarkable fact that, when they cease to touch the earth, their action on the soil, their ravages, also entirely cease, but recommence as soon as the extremity of the tornado is low enough to reach the tops of trees or roofs of houses, and especially when it comes in contact with the ground. Besides which, all tornadoes, so long as they have their lower extremity in the air, are invariably closed below, resembling a sack suspended by the upper opening, and with a stone or small weight at the bottom.

All the American tornadoes, great or small, in full action or at their outset, while they still hang from the clouds without reaching the ground, were described by witnesses on the spot as funnel-shaped or elephant's-trunk-shaped clouds. They have a geometrical figure. Their outer service is one of revolution. As it cannot be doubted that powerful gyrations are occurring inside that surface, it follows that those gyrations are geometrically circular, and the facts of the case are in perfect agreement with the theory of gyratory movements.

Every spectator of a tornado believes

that what he beholds is a portion of the upper clouds drawn down towards the ground. The air inside it must, therefore, be cold, since it condenses the moisture of the air down to our level. But the air outside the tornado is hot and moist, whilst persons directly struck by the tornado have felt, after the intense heat developed at the moment of the shock, an almost intolerable sensation of cold. The fact is completely explained by supposing this glacial air to proceed from the upper regions of the atmosphere, drawn down by the revolution of a descending vortex, exactly like the downward suction of a whirlpool in water.

"*Omnia bona desuper*," "all good things come from on high"—Bewicke's motto to his charming woodcut of a deer drinking at a waterfall, is doubtless true of matters in general; but it is equally true that some bad things, tornadoes included, also come to us from above.

The most striking feature of a tornado—which has been reproduced and fixed by instantaneous photography, and which is never seen except when the tornado is acting on the ground or on the water—is the formation of what M. Faye calls the "*buisson*," or bush, namely the cloud of dust, leaves, and rubbish of all sorts, or foam, which is raised at its foot. All the sketches and drawings by sailors and travellers give it. The whirlwind, beating and ploughing the earth circularly with prodigious force, raises outside and around itself clouds of froth and spray, or of dust and light bits of broken materials which, at a distance, looks like a thicket of copse-wood.

Do tornadoes pull up trees? They break or throw them down, but do not pull or pump them up. If they did, the trees so drawn out of the ground would be carried off vertically, in an upright position. Once out of the circle of action, they would fall to the ground in any chance direction. Nothing of the kind occurs.

Do tornadoes suck the roofs off houses? Not more than they pull up trees by the roots. A roof, struck by a violent horizontal wind, is lifted and carried away. By its very form, it will play the part of a boy's kite, which will cause it to rise to a considerable altitude. To an observer placed on the line of its course, it will appear to mount vertically. The same will happen to the sail of a ship carried away by a gust of wind.

A curious property of whirlpools in fluids

which revolve round a vertical axis, like those we see in the eddies of fast-running streams, is to subdivide into several smaller whirls, whenever the motion of whirling slackens. On the other hand, when that motion increases in force and rapidity, the smaller whirlpools merge into one of greater power and magnitude. M. Faye was so struck by the facility with which the gyratory motion subdivides and is resolved into other small gyrations, resembling the manner in which the inferior living creatures are multiplied by "segmentations," that he has borrowed from natural history the term, which seems to be accepted in meteorology. Almost all the tornadoes of the twenty-ninth of May presented phenomena of segmentation. Some divided into two or more; others, as the ten little tornadoes that hung down from the same cloud, combined their whirling motions into one.

It is certain that no part of the habitable world is more frequently devastated by tornadoes than the United States; and, on that extensive territory, some regions are more exposed to their ravages than others. Evidently, this state of things depends on the geographical situation of the country, and the configuration of its soil. A great part of the United States is very easily accessible to the hot winds of the Gulf, which spread at their ease over the vast spaces lying between the Cordilleras of the west, and the more or less mountainous States of the east. The combination of these circumstances is particularly favourable to the formation of tornadoes, associated with hailstorms or showers of rain, whose regular gyrations do not reach the ground.

The difference, in this respect, between Europe and the United States is perfectly comprehensible. We receive the majority of American cyclones, but they reach us weakened, broken, and with a partial loss of cirrus cloud. Our soil is less uniform in level, and the hot, moist winds of the lower strata have greater difficulty in spreading over vast areas at once.

Europe may now and again have its tornadoes, like that of Monville-Malauney, in France, but they are less numerous, less extended, and less fearful than in the United States.

Even in America, the districts lying between the Pacific and the grand chains of which the Rocky Mountains form part, appear to be exempt from this terrible and destructive scourge.

COMPENSATION.

ONE woman, in furs and velvets ;
 Another, in squalid rags ;
 One, rolled by in her stately carriage ;
 The other, stood on the flags.

One woman, alone in her carriage ;
 By the other, a little child,
 Who, watching the prancing horses,
 Looked up in her face, and smiled.

She stooped to her boy and kissed him,
 And gave him a hoarded crust ;
 The other had just left costly blooms
 Where her one son lay in dust.

One, back to her darkened mansion,
 Wealth cannot hold death at bay !
 One, back to the hut where labour
 Brought bread for the coming day.

Perhaps, as over the sands of life,
 Time's great tide ebbs and flows,
 More fates among us are equal
 Than their outward seeming shows.

A LONG RECKONING.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

PART III.

NORTH CANNOCK was about the last pit I should have picked out to work in, if I had had any choice in the matter. The water dripped and oozed from every bit of rock, and lay in pools, or ran in little streams along the gangways. There was a white growth, betwixt mildew and toadstools, along the sides of the passages ; the air was heavy, and the ground was slippery and greasy under your feet. Altogether it was the worst pit I ever worked in, and I meant to get my business with Dandy over as quick as possible and find myself a better job.

Now for the right understanding of what is to be told, I must tell you how the coal lay in that pit and how we worked it. The seams were unusually thin, and they ran downwards instead of crossways, so that only one or two men could work at a facing. Short passages sloping upwards from the main gangway led to each of these facings ; and, of course, the way the coal ran caused the working ends of these passages to be higher and roomier to stand up in than the lower ends, where they joined the broader passage.

I was put on single-handed, in a passage where the beams overhead and on one side had sunk—as often happens in a mine—so that a man had to stoop and hold himself a little on one side to pass along it ; yet there was plenty of room to stand upright at the end where the seam was. When Dandy

put me on my job, I didn't speak, lest my voice should let out more than my face could. As he went away, crouching under the sunken beams, I looked after him and thought how I might follow him bare-foot and very softly down that passage ; and when I came up to him, how I would whisper two or three words in his ear which would make him start and turn, and then I would twist my hands round his throat and force him, powerless to cry out, down on to the ground ; and then how I would crush the life out of him, and leave him there while I went as cool as possible to the cage and up into the open air, with my long reckoning settled at last. Again and again I thought it over, till I felt as if it were already done, and as if he lay dead and stark in the damp runnel at the edge of the gangway. Yet when he came my way at midday, I let him go safe, thinking evening would be better for me to get away ; and when evening came, I missed my chance again, because another man came along with him.

I don't think I had ever plainly meant to kill him, till I saw him so well-to-do and so seeming religious. Perhaps I had, and perhaps I hadn't. Anyhow, I meant it then, as certain as any man ever meant murder in this world ; but the days passed one after another, and there was always something to stand in the way of the deed ; either I had a mate working with me, or there was someone with him, or near us ; and once or twice when I could have done it easily, I let him go.

All this time I had never seen my old sweetheart, nor tried to catch sight of her, nor asked my landlady any questions about her daughter-in-law. I had that feeling on me, that if I saw her I should change my mind about what I meant to do to Dandy ; indeed, it was the thought of her eyes, even after all I had suffered through her, that kept him safe when there was nothing else between him and his death-blow.

So a few weeks went by, when one day, just as I began work, Dandy, for some reason best known to himself as "butty," came along with his tools and set to work at my "facing."

He placed himself so that I could have hit him with my pick on the back of the head, and it would have been all over with him before he could have raised a finger to save himself. Now when I saw him, so to speak, come and give himself up to me, I made up my mind that I would take the chance, and not put off any longer.

He spoke to me now and then, and now and then I took breath for a minute to see whether the moment had come to let the blow fall. The reason I didn't strike at once was that I couldn't settle what I should say to him to make him understand who I was, without giving him time to defend himself. You see he had tools as well as I had, and he was quite as strong as me.

We got one truck-load out and ran it into the main passage. "It shall be on the way back to the facings," I said to myself. "It's no use shilly-shallying any longer." So I let him go on first, stooping under the bent beams, while I hung back to get my chance, and to make sure that no one was within hearing. That must have taken about twenty seconds, but it seemed to me more like an hour. All was very still; there was nothing to be heard but the dripping of the water, and the far-off sound of voices; so I turned and made a step after him.

Suddenly I heard, not very far off, along the main passage, a heavy rumbling and falling, as if maybe the back of a coal-truck had given way, and let the load out; but it kept on too long for that, and it wasn't like the falling of brittle coal. Then it changed to a sort of roaring and rushing, like nothing I had ever heard before, and, as I turned back towards it, the light of my lamp fell on a truck spinning past, borne by a torrent of muddy water, which was rising as quickly as it rushed. At first the force of the flood bore it past the opening of our passage, yet it soon eddied round and sought a way upwards, gurgling and surging like a living, angry animal. Dandy turned too, but he didn't stand to think.

"Hi, mate!" he shouted, "the water has broken into the mine; get down to the gangway, we may reach the shaft yet."

But we couldn't possibly, the water was up to my shoulders where I stood, and the gangway must have been blocked besides with trucks. There was nothing to do but to get back to our working place, and to hope that the water wouldn't rise to the full height of the hole.

All this had come on us so quick, that it was only when we had waded back and climbed up a bit on the coal, that I could make out what had befallen me. There I was, four or five hundred yards from the shaft, shut up in a few square feet of breathing room, where I should most likely have to stay and starve, if the water

didn't rise and drown me; there I was with him of all men on earth. It seemed almost too cruel to be really true.

We had saved our lamps; Dandy began by putting his out. "We must make the most of the lights one at a time, so long as they'll last," he said. "We needn't be in the dark before we're obliged to be."

I let him do as he would. I didn't care whether we were in the light or in the dark. My head was full of one thought, which was, whether I should let him see his lamp burn out, or whether I should settle my reckoning with him at once, and then face the end alone. And yet what would it be like, I thought, if I were to do it, to have to stand there, half in the water and half out, clinging to the side of the working, with him lying in the water below me, and the recollection of his dying cry in my ears? And when I could stand no longer for cold and weakness, I should have to sink down and stifle and die, where I had thrown him before. It was for this I had wandered so far, and waited so long! It did seem hard that I was to be balked of my revenge, as I'd been balked all my life long. I hadn't spoken as yet, but thinking of this maddened me out of silence, and I raised my hand and cursed what had befallen us.

"Mate," said Dandy, "have a care to your words. It is the Lord who has laid this judgement upon us."

"Curse you for a canting humbug," I said back, and I tried my best to see into his face by the light of the lamp. I saw that his eyes were shut, and that his lips were moving; but I dared not lift my hand and kill him. He didn't speak again for a long time, how long I can't say; but I could tell by my hunger that dinner time was past, and my victuals were soaking at the bottom of the muddy water. Dandy had placed his higher than mine, and he'd thought of saving them when he ran back to the facing.

"Have a bit of bread and meat, mate," he said, when he spoke again. "If you're feeling as empty as I am you must want a bit: and your tommy-bag is under water, ain't it?"

"It is," I said, "and there it can stay; but I won't touch a bite o' yourn."

"Dont'ee spare, mate," he said again. "I've got a good bit, and I'd rather share as long as it lasts; you'd do as much for me if I had none."

"That I wouldn't," I said. "I'd chuck it all away sooner."

"Well, mate, I thinks different; and as you'll hold out longer with a bit of victuals inside you, you'd better take some."

"I won't, I tell you. Can't you let a man alone?" and I swore at him.

So he let me alone, and ate a bit himself, and put the rest away.

The time went on; whether it was minutes or hours or what, of course we didn't know. I reckoned that my lamp would last about four hours; it burnt itself out, and then Dandy had to light his.

The water, as far as we could see, kept at the same level, neither rising nor sinking. At last Dandy's lamp went out too, and then there was nothing to measure time by or to show us the surface of the water.

I was numb with cold, and faint with hunger, and I began to get heavy with sleep. For a while I thought I would lie down and make an end of myself, but somehow life is very hard to part with, even when you have nothing to do but to wait for death.

"Have a bit of bread now, mate," Dandy said again. "You'll be used up soon, and no one can get to help us for some time yet."

"And suppose no one does get to help us," I said back. "Suppose, before the mine is pumped out, we're both used up."

"Well, we're in the Lord's hands, and He knows what's best for us. We must make ready to abide His will."

"Speak for yourself," I said. "Don't put you and me together; you're too pious to be lumped in with a black like me."

"There's no difference betwixt us in His sight; we're both the work of His hands, and both sinful creatures. It ain't too late for you to call on Him. I'll help you if you'll let me."

But I didn't answer him, nor I didn't take his bread, and the time went on till the air about us was scarcely fit to go on breathing. I could never tell you how I felt. Talking about it is worse than nothing. Suppose you had been me, how could you have made any one else understand the dreadfulfulness of it all?

At last, in that weary darkness, I heard Dandy moaning to himself, as if he was very bad. For a good spell I hearkened, and then in spite of myself I felt used to ask him what ailed him in particular.

"I'm getting ready for death and judgement, mate," he said, "as I hope you are, and I'm thinking over the black bits in my life and what I've done amiss."

"And I suppose," I said, "that you've remembered something you'd forgotten all about while you been so pious, and now you begin to wish it hadn't cropped up to plague you at your last minute?"

"Nay, there you are wrong," he answered. "What's on my mind has been on it this long time, and is seldom off it. This ain't the first time I've moaned over it, and I know the Lord has forgiven me for it, only I ought to have made it up with asking a man's pardon too; for which I never could get the chance."

"Perhaps you didn't try after the chance?" I said.

I was ready enough to talk now, wishing to find out what tack he was on.

"There you're wrong again, mate. I can't tell you all the story, for it's a long one, and it lies only between him, and me, and my Maker. But this I can tell you, that I've sought that man, who was once a mate of mine, this many a year, as I promised my wife on her death-bed; but I never came across him."

"Is she dead then?" I asked, all struck of a heap.

"Yes; she's been dead six years. If you knew all the story, perhaps, you'd think it served me right to lose her. No doubt the Lord's hand was in it, to punish me for what I had done. I owed the man money, too; and I could have died easier if it had been paid back; but the Lord knows best."

Then he was quiet, and so was I, thinking how my Agnes was long dead and gone, and how while I had been looking for Dandy he had looked for me; and how what had gone crooked could never be pulled straight; and how it didn't matter whether we got out of the mine or stayed there to die.

My head got confused at last; I could not fix my mind on anything. I forgot where I was, and old places came back to me very clear and plain. It was wonderful. There were the moor, and the birch trees, and the heather, the river, and the evening sunshine. I even heard the singing of the thrushes, the rattle of the night-jar, and the heavy flight of the herons overhead. My sweetheart looked up into my face, and then laid her head on my shoulder. Then the sky turned black, and it grew dark and icy cold in a moment. Good Heaven! that sunset had been past and over a dozen years, and I should never see sun rise or set any more; nor would she. She was dead, and she had

been sorry for what she had done to me. I was sorry, too; and though I didn't know anything about being religious, I hoped I might be forgiven for having so nearly killed a man who would willingly have made some amends to me if it had lain in his power. A wonderful longing came over me to have it all out with Dandy; but I felt so faint and mothered that I didn't know how to begin. I opened my lips many times before words came; but at last I said:

"I say, mate, I've got summat to say that I should like you to hear; it fits in with what you was saying just now, so as you'll be greatly astonished. I had a chum once that I did a good turn for in saving his life. And I had a sweetheart that I held very greatly to, and who promised to marry me. Then once, when I wasn't there to keep things right, these two played me false. They robbed me, too, of all I had saved, and went away out of my reach."

Dandy wanted to stop me there, but I wouldn't let him.

"Wait a bit," I said. "I've begun now, and I should like to finish; we shall both die easier. I've done all I could ever since to find that chum that I might sarve him out. About a month ago I come across him, and I knowed him at a glance, though he'd set up for being pious and respectable, which he wasn't in old days. He didn't know me, because he had never seen me since my face got drawed on one side and scarred, so I've been following him up and watching my chance to kill him; yes, mate, to kill him, because he'd gone up in the world while I'd gone down, and because he'd set up for pious and respectable. And his death was very near upon him, only it didn't quite come up with him, and I'm glad it didn't. I'm glad my hands are clean from blood; and she's dead and gone, and you're sorry for what can't be mended."

I'd found it easier to go on than to begin, but when I'd got to the end, my throat seemed to swell up inside, and I heard myself laughing and sobbing by turns, and I felt Dandy's hand groping about till it lit on mine, and he said something about "Zekiel," and "His ways are past finding out." After which I can't rightly remember anything more; but that doesn't matter, for there is scarcely any more to tell.

Of course we got out—else I shouldn't be here telling this tale at the wish of young Obadiah Poole—but I had a very

close shave of not being here, for it took five days to get the water pumped out of the mine, and I was as near gone as possible before they reached us. Dandy lasted better than I did, because of the food he had had; and the last part of the time he had to hold me up as well as himself. Certainly after he knew who I was, he did all that in him lay, to make up to me for what I had lost through him; but all he could really give me back was that which I cared least for—I mean my twenty pounds with interest, carefully reckoned from the very day he had persuaded my girl to go off with him.

Thinking it all over now, it seems like a bit out of a book, such as Obadiah reads aloud to us, and if he has only done his duty by the pens and ink he's used up, I daresay a good many others will think so too.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcoties*," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THEY were provincial, and not of London, that was easy to see.

The old man betrayed it by his walk; by the cut and make of his clothes; by his unkempt hair and beard; and by a certain suspicion and distrust in his glance. The girl, who hung on his arm, proved it still more convincingly by the freshness of her colouring—those roses never grew in London—and by the modest, simple wonder in her frank, blue eyes: eyes that grew large and wistful at the endless procession of houses, of people, of gay carriages, of shops full of untold delights.

A good many passers-by found time, even in the busiest hour of the afternoon, to glance at the pair, who were of a distinguishable type. The man might be about sixty; though a rough and bracing life had made him look older. He was broad-shouldered and short, and his iron-grey hair framed a bronzed and wrinkled face, out of which a pair of light-brown eyes shone with the clear, bright glitter of cairngorms. An obstinate, self-contented face, except when it was turned towards the girl, and then it softened subtly, and betrayed many hidden gentler possibilities.

As for her, she reminded you of all sorts of modest country delights: honeysuckle and sweet-pea; the song of the lark; the

sunshine of green silences; and the freshness of daisied pastures. A shepherdess out of Arcady of a sudden borne into the throng and whirl, the vulgar activities of the Brompton Road.

She carried herself very well, and her slim erectness was a gift of Nature, and owed nothing to art. Her dress was simple; but there was deliberate personal choice in the fashion and cut of it, and in the touches of ribbon and what not that brightened it; and she was girlish enough to take a great interest in the beguiling bargains displayed in the windows, and to find many hints to stow away for future triumphs.

"So this is London, Uncle Bob?" she said, with a sigh of full content. "Big, wonderful, delightful London, that holds more people than there are in all Scotland; and we are four hundred miles away from home! I feel a great traveller. You never saw anything more wonderful than London, though you've been everywhere."

"Wait till you've been everywhere too, lass," said Uncle Bob, meeting this challenge with the condescending tolerance of one who has left nothing unseen.

"I want no more than this," she said with a contented laugh; "and we've a great deal to learn how and to mend in our ways, you and I. You must have your hair cut, dear; and there's something wrong with your coat. As for me, I want to be taken to pieces and made over again. I'm quite hopeless. The girls here, you see, have all studied their backs, Uncle Bob, and mine has been neglected. Miss Lamb has been too impartial; she ought to have scrimped the front view, and sacrificed everything to a lump behind. I'm like nothing so much as a 'drocket' sparrow," she said, surveying herself with mock melancholy in a sheet of mirror thoughtfully provided by an enterprising shopkeeper, with a knowledge of human nature and a desire to double the attractions of his window.

"Well, Tilly lass, you can make yourself as fine as thee love; there's the money to do it. I guess you won't find many that will turn up their noses at Bob Burton's cheque," he said with the complacency of a self-made man, and an accent that was impartially cosmopolitan.

"I guess you won't find many uncles as good as mine," she laughed, with affectionate caricature. "Where do you think we are now, Uncle Bob, and what do you think we shall do next?"

"According to my bearings, Tilly lass,

we can't be far from an eating-house. It's five minutes since we passed the last one, and I feel kind o' ready for a bite of something now."

"Why, it's only two hours since we dined," she smiled; "and four since we lunched. Then there was that little odd meal you slid in between breakfast and——"

"Call that a meal!" he cried with his big laugh; "it wasn't enough to keep a sick sparrow in life."

By this time they had halted before a window set out with sections of cake and cold pie, sausages, and other such dainties; and bearing the announcement in large letters that tea and coffee were made fresh for each customer.

"This will do as well as another, I guess. We might go further and fare worse," he said, giving the yielding arm which clung to his a little forward motion.

The shop was pretty full, as eating-houses seem to be at all hours and seasons in London, though the world is supposed to be divided into the two great classes of those who dine and those who lunch at midday.

It was the diners at two who were mostly represented, and these were courting indigestion over sections of cold pie and layers of ham as a foundation for the contents of the steaming tea-cup.

Uncle Bob drew his niece to a vacant corner, where a little table, just big enough for two, stood unclaimed, and Tilly sat down with a blush and eyes that drooped before the glances of the young men engaged at a larger table opposite.

One of them was still at the earlier stages of his meal, while the other had progressed to the plum-cake, which seemed to be the popular conclusion; but beyond a similarity of taste in food, they had no points of resemblance.

From their dress and appearance, both might be City clerks; but the one was a modest clerk, who looked at Tilly with the most respectful admiration, and the other was a forward clerk, who inspected her through an eyeglass, and approved of her audibly in terms of superfluous profanity.

Tilly was subtly aware of all this—it is an instinct with girls, even though they have been brought up on deserted islands, or, what is practically the same, in the blank solitude of a Scottish hill village, to know when they awaken admiration in the other sex. There was this vital difference, however—that the knowledge made her

served him quite as effectually as the best sort of breeding. When a man has breasted the blows of circumstances under all sorts of conditions, and has come out triumphantly a conqueror of his own fate, it is not John Thomas of the powdered head and silken calves who is going to make him tremble. Fate had befriended the rough Scotchman in most of his ventures, and he who had been held in honour as a King among the scanty squatting population of Southern Australia, who had wrung a measure of respect from the rough delvers of San Francisco by the luck that seemed to cling to him in all that he undertook, was hardly the man to be overawed by the comfortably prosperous air of western London.

But little soft, shy Tilly, whose simple code of etiquette was bounded by the hills that shut in Lilliesmuir, might well feel a thrill of dismay and uncertainty in face of so new an experience. At Lilliesmuir, three o'clock was the latest hour to which calling might with any decency be postponed. You thus shunned the two o'clock dinner—though you might share its lingering odours—and you in like manner left a margin of escape before the hour of tea. To wear one's Sunday hat and gloves and to have a wholesome respect for daylight hours, was part of the visiting law of Tilly's social world, and here were she and Uncle Bob defying custom at the very outset of the new life!

For Uncle Bob's coat was like no other coat they had encountered in London, and Tilly's travelling gloves had a shabby neatness in their mended tips; and, worse than all, the sanction of daylight was theirs no more, for everywhere without and within, gas and lamps had routed the dusk.

Houses have a way of betraying the character of their owners, even on the outside. Walking down Prince's Gate, on that side of it which faces the Art and Cookery Schools, and towards the end that abuts on the Park, you would have singled out Mrs. Percy Popham's house from its neighbours by the extra jubilation of its air. It seemed to step out as if it had a right to a front place, and it appeared somehow to have more balcony, more withered Virginia creeper, more glass-shaded flower-boxes, more blue and yellow pots than its companions.

Anybody might know that there was money enough here to gratify all sorts of whims, and some few shrewd and observant people would have made an accurate

guess that Mrs. Percy Popham, who owned the money, was a widow.

Perhaps Mr. Percy Popham would have had a more restrained taste in ornament; but he had been dead a long time, and was beyond consultation. In his day there had been no blue and yellow pots, and the footmen had not been clothed like strangely plumaged birds; but Mrs. Popham consoled her widowhood by many indulgences not permitted her in the married state.

She made a sort of merit of her bereft condition, as if she had voluntarily renounced Mr. Popham to some great cause. He had, in truth, died quietly in his bed of a very unromantic complaint, and it was only time—which so gently blurs and alters our remembered pictures—that turned him into a hero, and his wife into a martyr, for whom henceforward, life, to be endurable, must be gently cushioned.

She made it easy and pleasant for herself by a constant succession of enthusiasms, which gave it a spice and a sensation of being for ever at its fullest best.

Fortunately there is a large stock of alternatives in this busy world of ours, and Mrs. Percy Popham, by a gift of quick selection and abandonment, kept her pulses at full throb, and knew nothing of the languor of a prolonged afternoon, from which so many vocationless women suffer.

She had rushed across to the Cookery School, and had scrubbed pots and pans with an energy which the good plain cook of our day—even she who does not demand a kitchen-maid—would have scorned to expend; and when she had driven her own staff of servants to the verge of mutiny by her zeal in the practice of side-dishes, she was suddenly bitten with a desire to emulate the fair embroideresses who patronised the rival school.

So from one pursuit to another, with the activity of a bee, if not exactly with the lightness of a butterfly, she passed, taking from each its honey.

Among her later enthusiasms had been that sometime popular one for all that belongs to Scotland. In the quaint solitudes of Lilliesmuir, she had found that which her soul craved. For the space of a brief summer she was all Scotch. She wore the tartan, though Lilliesmuir had no Celtic traditions, and she strove with more perseverance than success to acquire the native accent. There too, she found Tilly, a little rustic beauty, on whom to lavish many endearments, to pet, to praise, to prepare for a great future in London,

where rustic beauties are sometimes the fashion.

But—alas! for poor Tilly and Uncle Bob standing, the one in half-shivering excitement, the other in ill-concealed impatience below the shining lamp, while the stately footman bow their message upwards—that fancy, born with the summer, was already dead in this November season, dead and buried—who shall say how deep!—under newer inspirations.

Tilly drew a step nearer her uncle when they were left alone.

"It's very grand," she whispered. "Uncle Bob, have you ever seen any house like this?"

The hall was very grand, certainly. It had everything in it that a hall could have, and if it had a little the air of having been transported complete from Tottenham Court Road, it was nevertheless very imposing.

A dusky maiden in bronze held aloft the lamp that lit this splendour of inlaid work, of curtains, statuettes, mediæval armour, and flowers. To Tilly, used to the austerity of the Manse, this was opulence indeed—the vestibule to fairy-land. But, alas, for the mortals who wait on the threshold! Here comes the gorgeous footman with "no admission" writ large upon him.

"My mistress is very sorry," said he of the silken calves, "but a particular engagement prevents her seeing Miss Burton to-day. If Miss Burton will leave her address, Mrs. Popham will write to her."

The man gave his message without absolute disrespect. What were these two to him? A London servant can tell at a glance whether you are of the sacred set to which he ministers; and there is nothing finer, to a discriminating observer, than the nice adjustment of his behaviour to suit your rank.

The Janus who guarded Mrs. Percy Popham's door was used to letting in all sorts and conditions of men and women, and if he took Tilly and her uncle for but a new variation of the old pattern—the pensioners and hangers-on who wait on a fine lady's pleasure—he but judged as you and I might have judged, had we walked behind the pair, had we noticed the make of Uncle Bob's boots and the fashion of Tilly's frock.

But no disciple of psychology, no professor of legerdemain, no exponent of the latest craze, had ever turned upon John Thomas as Uncle Bob now turned.

"Look here, my man," he said, squaring

his broad shoulders, "ye needn't think ye can take me in. Bob Burton's not the fool ye seem to think him. What did the ledly say?"

"She said she was very sorry she couldn't see the young lady to-day," the man repeated, infusing a little more respect into his tone. "She expects a visitor—a gentleman on business."

"Was that all?" Mr. Burton demanded in a voice that was ominously quiet. "Think a bit, my man. Was there no talk of spending the night, or of a meal, maybe—a bit of something hot, or even a cup of tea for the young lass, here?"

The man signified that there was no such talk.

"Uncle Bob, Uncle Bob, do come, dear!" cried Tilly, imploringly. "It is my fault. We can write——"

"Not with my will, lass."

"We can come again—another day—when Mrs. Popham is less busy."

"Come again!" Uncle Bob shook off her detaining hand almost roughly. "You and I will never darken this door again while I live to prevent it."

Then of a sudden his fierceness seemed to die out of him, and he said with a certain dignity, and an accent that grew in strength with his emotion:

"Tell your mistress from me that neither man nor beast—let alone a gentle young lass—would have been turned from my door without bite or sup, that had travelled four hundred miles on the strength of a great lady's friendship. Friendship! Heaven save us! The mair fule me to trust to sic a broken reed. Come awa, my bairn," he drew Tilly's arm within his own, "there's other doors in London that winna be steedit in our faces while there's the siller to pay for our meat and drink."

Tilly but too thankfully let herself be led out; but as they stood once more in the lamplight, and heard the door shut behind them, she put down her head on the rough sleeve to which she clung, and gave a little sob, half of relief, half of vexation.

Perhaps the next minute her light, girlish heart would have asserted itself, and she might have laughed, touched by the humorous side of this encounter; but Uncle Bob was in no laughing mood. In spite of his varied experiences, there was an odd and obstinate simplicity about the man that blinded him to the absurdity of his demands. In his own social world his wealth had made him a law to other men;

it had procured him hospitality wherever he chose to claim it; why should it fail him now? His personal egotism made it difficult for him to believe that all the world had not heard of Bob Burton's success. It says something for him, perhaps, that he found it almost equally difficult to believe that a real lady's word meant less than it seemed to mean. He was doubtful as to the realness of Mrs. Popham's ladyhood.

"Set her up! Ca' that a fine lady!" he growled under his breath. "I'ae warrant if all were told, she's but a generation out of the dirt herself. When she came to Lilliesmuir, where did she bide?" he demanded, turning to the girl.

"In the Manse. The inn is not comfortable," she faltered. "You mind you didn't like it yourself, Uncle Bob; and then, you know Cousin Spencer is always hospitable. It is a pleasure to him to see new people."

"They wull give her the hale of the rooms?"

"She had the spare room."

"There was a woman-servant with her?"

"Yes, she had a maid."

"And where did they put her?"

"She had my room." Tilly hung her head. When Uncle Bob spoke in that tone she had to answer.

"And I warrant she didn't sup on kale or good meal porridge. You gave her bed and board—the best that you had; and when you come to London, she, that was always yammer-yammering for you to visit her, hasn't a minute to speir after your health. It's the way of the world, my lass, and I was a fool to expect it to mend its manners at this time of day. Well, there's an end of that business."

Tilly knew very well it was the end—the end of a great many fair hopes and dreams that she could not have put into words. For one brief moment she was disloyal to Uncle Bob. He might have managed better; he might have been more patient, less exacting. Tilly would have left an address; would have gone again quite humbly, had she followed her own inclinations, which were all for peace.

They went a little way in silence up the dark and empty street, walking away from all their hopes, as it seemed. Of a sudden, Tilly felt weary; her feet lagged and her head drooped; and big London seemed no more a land of enchantments, but a great, weary desert, where they two might wander, homeless and unfriended.

But all at once the downward flutter of her spirits was arrested by Uncle Bob's new behaviour. Uncle Bob was now majestic, dignified; the roughness of his Scotch speech deserted him.

"There's hospitality to be got yet for those that can pay for it," he said, and he hailed a passing cab. "Take us to the best hotel in London," he said to the driver. "The one where they give you a good show for your money, and plenty to eat and drink, d'ye hear?"

The cabman nodded. London cabmen are used to eccentricity in their fares; perhaps that is why nothing ever surprises them. They are quick to read character, too, and in Uncle Bob's eye there lurked the promise of an extra fare.

"All right," he said, "you trust to me, gov'nor, I knows the right shop for you."

Tilly got in, nothing loth. The wilderness lost some of its terrors since one had not to tread its weary lengths, and who could tell what new adventures might not be lurking for them at the other side? And while they rattled cheerfully over the way Uncle Bob drew the little girl kindly to his side, with one protecting arm holding her close.

"Cheer up, my bonnie birdie," he said, "there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it."

Tilly saw nothing at all as she rested her head on the shaggy shoulders; she had given up wishing or caring, and the pictures Uncle Bob drew of the gowns and jewels, the golden chairs and marble halls that money could and should buy for her, passed through her brain as visions set to a chiming music which grew into a pleasant murmur. Was it Uncle Bob's voice that fell so soft and low that she could scarcely hear it above the rolling wheels? And presently the dancing gas-lights faded and went out, and Tilly was no more in London, but was wandering among the silent folds of hills whose sides autumn painted in sere reds and golds, and in her hand was a sprig of late blooming white heather.

But this time it was Uncle Bob's voice without question, and it was saying:

"The bairn's been sleeping! Waken up, my dove; here we are. This is better than my lady's, Tilly lass!"

She sat up confused and dazed, with but one conscious thought.

"I've lost my white heather, Uncle Bob—the heather that was to bring us luck!"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 962. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Cortinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VII. "FAITH OR REASON."

THE next day Neale Kenyon went up to London. The small house-party at the Abbey did exactly as they pleased—the young hostess seeming, if anything, gayer, more capricious, and more brilliant even than her wont.

Yet she herself knew that a restlessness, an irritation, a curious dissatisfaction, were ever at work in her heart now. The fact she allowed; the reason she ignored. Self-knowledge and self-depreciation are not very comfortable companions, she confessed to herself as the idle, pleasure-filled days drifted by, each bringing in its train additional ennui and additional discontent.

It angered her excessively to think that one man, and one of the very few men in whom she had ever condescended to interest herself, should have so thoroughly fathomed her nature, and should so hold it in his power to show her its weakness and egotism. She had seen him once or twice as she rode or drove, but she had not spoken to him since the night that had first made him her guest. She heard his praises constantly; his energy, his zeal, his unselfishness were themes on every tongue. They seemed to set him further and further away from her. She felt, for the first time, how useless and frivolous her own life was, and yet she resolved not to alter it, lest he should take the change as due to his influence, or advice.

Sometimes, as she thought of his words on the terrace, of the look in the grand

grey eyes, she told herself she hated him—hated him for showing how contemptible was her spoilt artificial life, and the very coldness and immobility on which she prided herself.

"It is ridiculous," she would say in her heart, "to suppose I could learn from the poor and the unhappy what the world has never taught me! Those who are ignorant are passively content—they know no better. Peasants who work in the fields and grub away in their cottage-gardens, think themselves in Paradise if anyone gives them a sovereign, or a dinner—perhaps, of the two, they would prefer the dinner—and overwhelm one with gratitude for unlimited roast beef and beer. Now, no educated person would do that; and yet Mr. Lyle and his followers would say: 'See, here are content and gratitude!' I can have the sovereigns and the stalled ox every day of my life if I please, but certainly can neither feel nor express gratitude for them; therefore he looks upon me as a discontented person, and one unworthy of the so-called blessings of life. I suppose beer and beef would be a blessing, if I were hungry; but I have never had an opportunity of being—that."

Then she laughed softly at her own reasoning, and took up her big red parasol and went out on to the lawn, where the garden-chairs were placed under the great cedars.

Lady Breresford was there reading, and Alexis ordered the servants to bring them out some tea and fruit, and took a seat beside her friend.

"Everyone is out," she said, "but ourselves. It is really too hot for any exertion. I wonder Fay never gets tired. She is full of life."

"Yes," said her aunt. "The child never has an idle moment."

"You say that," answered Alexis with a little smile, "as if it were a reproach. But Fay is young yet. She will grow wiser by the time she has worked off some of her superfluous energy. Now I——"

"You!" interposed Lady Breresford. "I never remember that you had any to work off—and I have known you a good many years!"

"That," said Alexis, "is a melancholy fact. Positively I begin to feel old. There seems so much to remember——"

"So long as you don't look old," interrupted Lady Breresford, "there is nothing to lament. As for remembering—you have always told me it was too much exertion. Have you changed your mind on that point?"

"Have I a mind to change? That is the question," she asked ironically. "I begin to doubt it. I was almost told so the other night."

"Who was so bold?" asked her friend, wondering. "Not a man, surely!"

"Would you call Mr. Lyle a man?"

"Most decidedly. But was he so audacious?"

"I don't know," the girl answered thoughtfully, "that I should call him that—exactly. He was only candid."

"Well," said Lady Breresford, "you always profess to admire candour—but perhaps you only meant in theory."

"It is apt to do away with comfortable impressions," said Alexis. "Mr. Lyle has what I should call a disturbing influence upon one. Did you not think so?"

"He never gave me an opportunity of judging," said the elder lady demurely. "He evidently found it more agreeable to find fault with you."

"Oh," she said indifferently, "that is his vocation. I expected it."

"You know you did nothing of the sort," said her friend quickly. "No man has ever yet dared tell you that you are anything but an enchantress. And," she added, smiling a little, "I wonder where even Mr. Lyle found his courage."

"Must I again remind you that fault-finding is his vocation?" said Alexis coldly. "He has nothing but contempt for the frivolities of fashionable life. I am not surprised. It is a paltry thing—a jumble of discordants—a make-believe at enjoyment that is weariness, and pleasure that is bitter in its after taste. Wasted time, wasted regret, wasted energy, and all as the result of a mortal nature endowed with reason, imagination, capacity. It

does look contemptible when one thinks of it. Even you must acknowledge that."

"Even I?" and Lady Breresford laughed. "I am not given to self-reproach, and I have not lived entirely for pleasure, though you appear to consider me a very worldly person. I have had a fair share of intellectual enjoyment, though I have not cultured my nature, as you have yours, at the expense of all that is simple, and homely, and natural. You are dissatisfied with everything and everybody. There lies the shadow that haunts your life. Perhaps it is the phantom of a higher self that you deny. I think so, sometimes."

"I have no higher self," said the girl with sudden bitterness, "or else I have been deaf to its voice so long, that now I never hear it."

"You have a long future before you," said Lady Breresford, gravely. "Why do you always speak as if the past were everything?"

"Because I hate to look forward," she cried with sudden passion. "I have all I want materially; but this discontent; this craving after something which neither mind, nor soul, nor sense can satisfy; this it is that I dread in years to come. I am not old; I am not stupid; and the world is good enough to call me fair; but for all that I can't say I have ever enjoyed an hour of simple happiness, nor can I imagine myself doing so."

"You are unfortunate," said Lady Breresford gravely. "Perhaps you expect too much of everyone and everything. And then," she added, looking scrutinisingly at the delicate, lovely face, "you give your mind all to do, your affections—nothing."

"Is that my fault?" said Alexis. "I am fastidious, I know. Can I help that? It is my nature—myself, so to say. I think I am more to be pitied than blamed."

"So do I," said her friend frankly. "If you could fall in love, now?"

Alexis gave a little impatient movement. A shadow fell upon the grass under the great swaying cedar-boughs. As she half turned her graceful head, she saw Adrian Lyle standing behind her chair. The little start she gave was one of real, not affected surprise.

"How did you come?" she asked, as she gave him her hand. "We did not see you."

"No; I know that," he said, turning to greet Lady Breresford. "I was on my way to the house when I saw you on the

lawn, so I took the liberty of joining you. I wanted to ask your help in a case where womanly help will be of greatest service. I hope I may count on yours."

Lady Breresford looked somewhat amused.

"Miss Kenyon was just lamenting her uselessness," she said. "Your request is quite opportune."

"On the contrary," said Alexis, with her coldest air, "I never interfere with parish matters. I leave all that to my housekeeper."

"This matter," said Adrian Lyle, looking at her coldly and sternly, "is not one that is quite within the capacity of a—housekeeper. It needs womanly skill and refinement, not ostentatious charity. Excuse me if I have made a mistake in thinking I might count upon you."

"What is the case?" asked Lady Breresford; "may I hear it?"

Alexis turned aside with an air of indifference, and poured out some tea which one of the footmen had just set on the rustic table. A hot flush burned on her cheek, a sense as of personal affront rankled in her heart at the memory of that look from the young clergyman's eyes. Yet she listened eagerly for his next words.

"The story is very simple," he said gravely. "A young widow, married but two years, is left in absolute poverty by the sudden death of her husband. She is a lady—well educated, delicately nurtured, and now seeks employment of some kind by which to support herself independently. I thought, I hoped, that among Miss Kenyon's many friends something could be found for her. She is a good musician and linguist, thoroughly refined, and would, I am sure, be of service to anyone needing a governess."

"Do you think I need one?" asked Alexis, with a little slighting laugh. "I assure you I detest the whole species. I have had ample experience of them. And I would never recommend any friend to inflict upon her family the discomforts I have undergone. As a rule they are a mistake, an intolerable nuisance, a——"

"Pardon me, Miss Kenyon," interposed Adrian Lyle, almost angrily. "If fortune has favoured you above your fellow sisters, that gives you no right to abuse them. You surely can't mean what you say. Your very knowledge of the world must have shown you that there are misfortunes possible even to the rich and well-born. But

where there is no sympathy one cannot expect assistance. Pray forget that I troubled you on this subject."

He spoke courteously; Alexis Kenyon was conscious of deserving his implied rebuke, but she would not acknowledge this.

"You should apply to Lady Breresford," she said, handing him a cup of tea as she spoke. "She is full of the charity you admire and extol, and I believe she thinks people are really grateful for her trouble on their behalf. For my part, I am sure that to benefit any one is the very surest way of making an enemy."

"I can quite imagine," said Adrian Lyle, "that it is possible to do so. But to avoid it is the secret of true charity."

"It is a secret," she said, coolly, "that I have never learnt. And I am not sure that I care to do so. I am far too indifferent as to how people regard me. I certainly don't like to see them hungry, or thirsty, or in rage; but, if I give them food and clothes, I object to being overwhelmed with thanks for altering a state of things that mainly offends my taste and sense of fitness. It would not please me in the least to be hailed as a benefactress, simply because I dislike dirt and want in the abstract."

"You have made quite a fine art of selfishness," said Adrian Lyle ironically. "I wonder you don't write a treatise on it for the benefit of philanthropists."

She laughed, the clear, low, amused laughter that always irritated and annoyed him.

"Perhaps I will," she said, "some day. I have but scant pity for incompetence, failure, or stupidity. Those are the true secrets of poverty."

"I differ from you," said Adrian Lyle. "Poverty is a misfortune that sometimes the wisest amongst us cannot avert. It falls too often on the helpless, the young, the old, the suffering, from faults or crimes for which they have been in no way responsible."

"But they are links in the chain of incapacity or crime, even if they only show its result; and the result springs from the cause I have mentioned. Every theory has its first principle, so I am still right in the main point."

"Miss Kenyon," he said, smiling despite himself, "this is not the first time I have discovered that it is dangerous to argue with you. I bow to the inevitable. I shall not again attempt to plead the cause of the unfortunate in your ears."

"You take a romantic and impartial view of them and their cases," she said coolly. "Even look at the one in point! A man has no right to marry unless he can afford it. It is senseless and criminal, too, to entail upon a weak woman, or on helpless children the fate which you say has overtaken this woman. But men are always selfish and inconsiderate where their passions are concerned."

"You make no allowance, then," he said, "for love; its strength, or desire, or fatality."

"Oh," said Lady Beresford, with evident amusement, "Miss Kenyon does not believe in love at all."

"Not as I have found it," said the girl scornfully.

"Mr. Lyle will, perhaps, favour us with his views as to its reality, or uses," suggested Lady Beresford.

"Madam," said the young clergyman, with a grave bow, "you lay too hard a task upon me. Besides, to one of my calling and profession——"

"I hope," she interrupted hastily, "you do not go in for the celibacy of the clergy."

A sudden flush mounted to his brow, as he caught the cool interrogative glance of Alexis Kenyon's dark eyes.

"No," he said, "far from it. But love, in the acceptance of the world that Miss Kenyon graces, has a different creed and code to that which I would give it."

"And what," asked Alexis ironically, "would be your creed and definition?"

He hesitated for a moment, reading only too plainly the defiance and arrogance of her glance.

"I have seen it," he said, "make the humblest lot a blessing, even as its want has made the noblest and most fortunate a curse. I would define it as the common need of a common humanity, without which no life is complete, no heart satisfied. Not a thing of the senses, the imagination, the caprice of time, or place, or opportunity, such as the fashionable world miscalls its fleeting fancies, but a true and elevating devotion to something pure and worthy; a feeling that gives shape and force to our dreams of happiness, and lifts the soul to purer hopes and higher ambitions: that alleviates misfortunes, that ennobles life; that sanctifies and comforts even life's cruellest enemy—Death."

There was a moment's silence. It was broken by Alexis Kenyon's cold and alighting laugh.

"You are quite poetical, Mr. Lyle," she said. "What you say sounds all very pretty and romantic, but I should define love very differently. I should call it a momentary illusion, which captivates the senses, and renders a person utterly incapable of judging the captivator by any real or rational method. Were it anything different it would last, but it never does. I have never seen a love, however passionate and adoring, outlive one single year of its disenchantment—marriage. This proves what I say, that people are only loved for what one imagines in them, not for what they really are. I grant you, love may live where adverse fate has parted the lovers. They have still their illusion intact, and all the great love tragedies and histories of the world have been, so far, happy. But if Juliet had lived to cook Romeo's dinners, or Beatrice to iron Dante's shirts, they would have had no history, and their love would have turned out as commonplace as our nineteenth-century prose."

"Really, my dear," said Lady Beresford, "you have the most singular ideas."

"They are quite true, if you would only search the question out, instead of accepting it as a truism. Mr. Lyle is too unworlly to do so; he keeps his illusion still in some secret chamber of his heart; but he may take my word for it, that his ideal is only a woman, like any other woman, with nothing of the angel about her, save what his fancy pleases to bestow."

Adrian Lyle looked straight at the beautiful, cold face; his own was somewhat pale. A vision of Gretchen rose before him—Gretchen in her beautiful youth; her innocent faith; her simple happiness. Would love ever be to her what this cruel and merciless dissector of human passions called it? The thought stung him with the sharpness of recognised possibility. It seemed to thrust away the sentiment, the sacredness, the glory of that passion which had been to her nature as sunlight to the folded buds, as the marvels of assured divinity to the credulous devotee.

"I am happy, Miss Kenyon," he said, "in having illusions such as you describe; and I am sorry that even your youth and beauty have brought you no faith in the sincerity of emotions you must have awakened."

"Do you wonder at it?" she asked suddenly, and looked at him with her strange, half-mournful eyes—eyes from which the

longings and discontent of her strange nature looked wearily forth on the world she despised, and the men she scorned.

For a moment he returned that look, trying to fathom the real mystery of her dissatisfied soul. But he saw no further than others had seen; he read no more than others had read.

Yet suddenly her eyes drooped. A certain softness and regretfulness came over her face.

"I really would be tender-hearted—if I could," she said. "Perhaps it is my Russian blood—I do not know; only certainly I lack compassion."

"Lacking that," said Adrian Lyle, "means that you lack all that makes womanhood divine."

Something in his look and tone brought back the hardness and coldness she had for a moment laid aside.

"Have you found it divine?" she asked mockingly. "If so, do not seek disillusion through the prosaic portals of marriage. The clergy of all men should be celibate. They believe in angels."

Lady Breresford had left her seat and wandered a short distance off, and was feeding one of the peacocks with crumbs of cake. Adrian Lyle suddenly bent forward and looked, straight into the beautiful, baffling face of his companion.

"Miss Kenyon," he said earnestly, "may I speak to you seriously and without offence?"

"Certainly," she said with equal gravity. "I have not the slightest objection to your converting me, if you can."

He put aside the challenge without remark.

"You do yourself a great injustice," he said, "when you speak of all that is best and noblest in life in so slighting a manner. I have no wish to preach to you—far from it; but it pains me to hear maxims so worldly, convictions so cruel, uttered by such young lips. You yourself confess you are not happy. Then why deny every possibility that might make you so? Do you think all those gifts of mind and body that you possess deserve no gratitude, or will exact no account? Do your sophisms, clever as they are, really satisfy your heart? Does the denial of the natural softness and requirements of womanhood find greater content in the development of your intellect, than it would in the awakening of your sympathies? I am sure it does not."

"I have never attempted to deny that

I am not happy," she said softly, as she slowly pulled the petals of the rose that had fallen from her gown. "But can any of your creeds teach me to become so?"

"I think," he said, "they might, if only you would believe them. But you dissect even faith as mercilessly as the flower you hold in your hand."

"Faith in the abstract—yes. How are you to convince me that I am right in believing a certain doctrine which another person, equally educated and clear-judging, holds in utter abhorrence? Religion is a mere matter of accident. We are not responsible for our parentage—therefore not for our faith. We are taught in childhood to believe such a creed, to worship such a divinity; we do it. Our minds are plastic clay, and take individual impressions. Are we responsible for them, or to blame because in after years our intellect rebels at what our duty compelled us to accept? True, the generality of mankind never even think of stepping out of their groove: it is much easier to tread the beaten track than to cut out a new one for ourselves. I have investigated many forms of religion. I can't say I have found any to satisfy me. The Church professes to do a great deal, but I doubt if it has ever done any real or permanent good. All great truths of science and knowledge have been arrived at by man's own dogged resolves, not by any help of ecclesiasticism; rather, indeed, has it been the way of its rulers and directors to shut humanity into complete and unquestioning ignorance. True, we have plenty of freedom now, but that is because thought and reason have been too strong for even priestcraft to combat."

"Your arguments," said Adrian Lyle, "are of course the outcome of minds that are doing their best to overthrow the growth of any faith. But we have drifted far away from our starting point. Can nothing give you a little more content in life as it is, a little more hope in what it may be? The very extent of your discontent is proof that your soul cries out for food that philosophy cannot supply. You refuse your feelings full play. You argue and dissect every sensation that meets you, or that is awakened in you. But, believe me, it is the simple things of life that awaken its purest feelings. A child's faith, a woman's tenderness, an act of self-denial, a deed of unrecognised heroism—these are capable of giving purer happiness, of teaching nobler morality than the cleverest

treatise of philosophy, the most perfect form of external religion. I am not good at reasoning. I only know the truth and actuality of certain convictions which have led me to a profession I but imperfectly uphold. That I am the happier for doing so, I frankly confess. I wish——" he added earnestly as he looked at the fair, cold face, "I could make you so."

For a moment she was silent; then looked at him with her coldest and most critical air. "It would not be possible," she said, "I am one of Nature's mistakes. Nothing will change me."

"Yes," he said suddenly, as he rose from his chair to take leave—"one thing. But I will not wish it you."

"And that one thing?" she questioned, smiling.

"Is a great sorrow——" he said, with a gravity that was almost compassionate.

MRS. SILAS B. BUNTHORP.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

It was a night in May.

The music of the ball-room was borne on the heated, perfumed air, up through the well-staircase, to the gallery above.

"Doesn't it seem like Heaven, down there—and you and me up here in the darkness!"

The little white figure, kneeling on the floor of this upper gallery, with hand clasped round the balusters, peering down into the hall below, into which overflowed some of that ball-room radiance, turned to the other figure kneeling by her.

"Miss Coleridge!" exclaimed the little white figure again, this time more impatiently, for the sense of loneliness and neglect, and of being shut out from all the beautiful sights and sounds below, was growing stronger in her childish soul. "Isn't it lovely? Don't you smell the flowers?—and here we are up here!"

"A most indisputable fact!" said Miss Coleridge dryly.

But she was not unsympathetic. Her present position betrayed that, for she was risking her appointment, which she could ill afford to do, by yielding to her little pupil's entreaties to let her leave her bed, at this late hour of the night, to get a glimpse into the far-off Fairyland beneath them.

"Poor little Peri!" she said with a touch of scorn in the amusement of her

dark eyes, as the child turned her face to her for sympathy.

"Peri! What's that?" asked the child fretfully.

"It was a poor little thing, who stood outside Paradise, knocking to be let in."

"And did she ever get in?" with plaintive eagerness.

Then the pretty, scornful eyes of the governess changed. She bent forward in the dusk of the spring night, and drew the child swiftly, and very tenderly, to her.

"I believe she did. And this is what she found inside that Paradise. She saw a great many grand-looking figures, who seemed like men, only she thought they were gods. They made a great fuss over her when she first got in. But they soon began to find out that they had made a mistake, by letting her in. For her dress rustled, and disturbed their after-dinner naps, and then they had to give her a chair, which rather crowded them. Besides, they found out that her face was always the same, and they even grew tired of its beauty. She ought to have been able to change the colour of her eyes, or give a new shape to her nose. But I think, perhaps, she felt most disappointment. They looked so grand, as they sat in the distant sunlight, with their button-holes. But, when she lived closely among them, she found out that they were only bundles of clothes, and cigars, and kid gloves. She tripped once, and clutching at the figure she thought the grandest, to save herself, it doubled up beneath her weight, and they both fell to the ground. But it only hurt her. He had but to be picked up again, and shaken and brushed a little, and his clothes looked as grand as ever. Oh! you little goose!" An indescribable change in her tones: "You are much better up here in the dark, with me!"

"I like to be with you, though that wasn't a pretty story at all. But it is dull sometimes. Do you think, if I had a mother like Maysie and Laura, I should be down there instead of up here?"

"Probably."

There was another change in the girl's tone. It was hard as steel.

"Now you are to come back to bed."

Hand in hand, the two flitted through the darkness and loneliness of this upper part of the house. All the servants were below, and these two—the little governess, in her work-a-day dress of brown merino, and the child, with her white wrapper flung over her bed-gown, had the place to themselves.

"You see we are not dressed for a party," said Miss Coleridge, with the scorn which had grown rather habitual to her since she had lived in this great house. "What a sensation we should cause if we suddenly appeared in the ball-room!"

The little girl laughed, childishly amused at the fancy, as her governess intended her to be.

"It would be fine. Mr. Aylmer said the other day, as he stood in the hall talking to Maysie, that he had never seen such a frock as yours before. He said it was a crime for any girl like you to wear it. You had just passed them. He did stare at you so."

"And where were you?" asked Miss Coleridge very severely, taking no outward notice of the speech as it concerned herself.

"I had dropped my ball down the staircase and ran after it. I didn't know they were there. I tried to hide behind the curtains, but he saw me just after he had said that. Maysie was very angry with me."

"I don't wonder. You were very disobedient."

"I only wanted my ball; and he asked who I was, and Maysie said, a protégée of theirs. What is a protégée?"

"A peg to hang people's cloaks of charity upon. Sometimes the cloak is so ample that it quite smothers the poor little peg. Hush! what is that?"

They had reached a passage which led down to the school-room part of the house, where Miss Coleridge and her pupil lived and slept, almost as isolated from the other apartments as if they had been living in a separate house. The great front staircase passed the end of the passage which they themselves had just reached by a back flight. Sounds of feet running lightly up the great staircase, a few yards from them, fell on their startled ears. The child clung to her governess.

"It is Mrs. Englefield," she whispered in terror.

The little governess paled too, though more in sympathy for the child's dread; not for a second recognising the incongruity of connecting those light, quick feet with her employer's stout, majestic appearance.

"Come!" she exclaimed, with a most undignified rush towards their bed-room doors, which unfortunately lay on the other side of the school-room. But they were too late. A tall and remarkably handsome young man in immaculately-fitting clothes,

with a flower in his button-hole, turning into the passage from the great staircase, caught sight of the two figures flying though the moonlight, which lighted up this side of the house.

Inspired by some luckless spirit of mischief, or perhaps attracted by the curious resemblance between one of those fugitive figures and another which he had come to meet there, he dashed after them.

"I've found you out!" he exclaimed, laughingly catching at the child's golden hair. He was totally unprepared for the terror he caused.

The child clung to her governess with a stifled cry, while the governess herself, whose beauty had several times attracted his notice, coupled as it was with that strange resemblance, turned upon him with a desperate gasp.

"Oh, I say. I'm awfully sorry. I didn't mean to frighten——"

"You did not—frighten—us—at—all," said Miss Coleridge distinctly, with most unsteady voice. "You only made me jump a little, that's all."

"I beg your pardon," began the young man again, ashamed at the disastrous effect of his little jest, and yet very much inclined to laugh at the deliberate disregard for truth displayed by this moral instructress of youth. "By Jove!" with a start, turning towards the great staircase.

It was his turn now to betray the most undisguised alarm and consternation. Miss Coleridge turned sharply too.

Up the staircase, came the frou-frou of silk and the soft rattle of the pearl fringe of a ball-dress.

Some one else was also coming to this isolated portion of the house.

It was not the first time it had been used for lovers' meetings.

In one flash of thought Miss Coleridge understood. It was a tryst. And seeing the young man, she knew who the other would be, who was to share it with him.

"On your honour, Mr. Aylmer, don't tell her!" she exclaimed breathlessly, looking up into the young man's face. There was no hope of reaching their bed-rooms. "Quick, Maggie, the school-room cupboard."

The next moment the young man was alone, with the click of a lock sounding in the room behind him, and the frou-frou of the dainty ball-dress, which had reached the passage at the same second, rustling the air before him.

He stood still, looking at this new figure

fluttering towards him, all white in the moonlight.

Then a great rush of delight at the sight of it made him forget all the awkwardness of the situation. He went hastily forward, and caught two daintily-gloved little hands in his.

"I was afraid you would forget—or not dare," he exclaimed, looking down with eyes full of passionate admiration into the lovely face of Maysie Englefield, his hostess's eldest daughter.

"I never forget, sir. But I almost did not dare. Mother is growing so dreadfully sharp-sighted."

His face darkened. It was very bitter to be reduced to this clandestine love-making, and all because his friends, who were always promising to do something for him, had not yet begun. If only he were rich or lucky, Mrs. Englefield—

"Do let my hand go, Jack. Anybody can see us from the staircase. It looks so silly to have you staring at me like an owl in the moonlight," she exclaimed, in the laughing insolence and impatience of her beauty. She was fond enough of him to slip out of the ball-room to meet him here alone; but she did not want to be found out. "Come into the school-room. We shan't be seen there."

He dropped her hands as if he had been shot—a sudden recollection that the school-room had a capacious cupboard overwhelming him. For Maysie's own sake it was a risk to let her go in there. How could he tell whether the child would not betray them at the first opportunity? while, of course, it was the governess's duty to expose such escapades as these, to the authorities.

"No; I'm not going to stay out here," in answer to a stammering mumble. "The servants will see. Besides, that's Miss Coleridge's room down there; she will hear us talking."

The young man glanced with helpless dismay towards the door so innocently closed at the end of the passage.

"If only she were there!" he groaned inwardly. "It's so much jollier out here, darling. There's the moonlight, you know, and it's all dark in that school-room."

"I never knew you were afraid of the dark before. If you are, I'm going. I'm sure the next waltz—"

He followed her rapidly into the school-room. The fear of losing even a moment of that snatched meeting overcoming all other doubts.

Now, if any man has tried to make love with the full consciousness that other ears save the legitimate recipients of his rhapsodies, are listening, he may form some idea of what Jack Aylmer felt under his present circumstances.

To make the situation still more trying, Miss Englefield had gone over to the window where the moonlight fell full through the raised blinds. The cupboard was close to this window. Aylmer, not daring to make any further objections, followed her there. The thought of betraying the real cause of his reluctance never entered his head. Miss Coleridge had appealed to his honour, while the evident fright of the two, ludicrously out of place as it seemed, for he guessed that they had only been taking a stolen glance at the festivities, made their betrayal still more impossible.

"It's a lovely evening," he said desperately, feeling a mad desire to draw her to him, as the moonlight touched her into pale loveliness; but resisting it, as he thought of the cupboard.

"A very original remark; only I've heard something like it before. You might have said that downstairs, without making me run the risk—"

"Hush, for goodness—I don't mean that," at sight of her astonished face. "Of course I don't mean that. It's so awfully jolly having you up here" (in a whisper), "that I don't know what I am saying."

"So it seems. Don't stand so close, Jack. There, you have snapped off one of my flowers. I didn't come here to be kissed," a note of impatience in her clear voice, "and, for goodness' sake, don't go whispering in my ear like that. Why can't you speak aloud, instead of buzzing away like a great bumble bee?"

She laughed, but there was a jar of something wrong in the laugh, as there had been in the words. It was a new mood, this hard impatience.

Jack Aylmer stepped back a yard from her, instinctively feeling the discord, and yet, for the second, more actively conscious of a most unmistakeable, though quickly-suppressed giggle, in the cupboard behind him. That little governess was enjoying her part of the situation.

"I must go now," said Miss Englefield, who, rearranging a fold in her ball-dress, had heard nothing. "My next waltz is with Lord Maitland. I daren't crêpe him out with mother in the room."

The young man followed her in silence.

The mention of that other man's name had raised a whirlwind of doubt, fear, and jealous anger in his heart. He lingered on the landing till he was sure that she had rejoined, unperceived, her mother's guests; for, even in the midst of his doubt of her faith, he loved her too well to let her get into trouble by being seen with him. Before he had reached the middle of the flight a white rose was flung over the balusters from above. It was the rose which he had broken off Maysie's dress. It struck him on the cheek, and fell at his feet. He caught it up tenderly, angry at the profanation. The petals fell, a shower of scented snowflakes, on the stair before him.

He glanced swiftly up, with a sudden sinking of his heart, as if that frail flower had been an omen. But the landing above was empty.

CHAPTER II.

A WEEK later, Miss Coleridge came out of a house in a street some distance from Grosvenor Walk, where the Englefields lived. Her face was rather pale, and she glanced about her nervously, as if a little afraid of being seen, for the house she had just left, belonged to a woman with whose name all London had rung a few years before. It was a pitiful story—yesterday, a queen of society; to-day, an outcast. The husband she had wronged had revenged himself by refusing to take proceedings of divorce. The man for whom she had sinned, who would have married her at first, had at last left her for another whose love was honour. The father, who had idolised her, had cursed her. The child she had borne, had been brought up an alien from her.

Perhaps it was very wrong of Miss Coleridge to speak to such a woman, and yet when, one day, she had waylaid her and pleaded with such bitter tears for some news of the child she had herself deserted, Miss Coleridge had yielded. To-day, she had been to see her. Miss Coleridge was good, and as sweet as she was good, which combination is a rare one. She was good enough not to fear being harmed by touching the hand of such a woman; but she was young, and it is hard sometimes to have the courage of one's convictions, even when one is old. At the sight of a young man coming down the street, as she left the house, she turned the colour of a poppy, and her first impulse was to run away; but it was too late. He had seen her. So, with a certain

uplifting of the head, which gave dignity to her decidedly childish appearance, she went bravely forward.

Mr. Aylmer had looked really shocked when he first caught sight of her; but when they met, his handsome face expressed only polite interest. She bowed, and would have passed on; but he turned and walked by her side. Having nothing particular to do, the thought of a stroll with the Englefields' pretty little governess was tempting. Besides, he was really curious to know what had taken her to that house.

"Do you mind my going a little way with you?"

She flushed faintly, her eyes falling before his, which were so flatteringly pleading, though his words and voice were so simply commonplace.

"I don't mind—if you have nothing better to do," she said with a shy demureness, which made her ten times prettier.

A flash of amused conquest lighted the young man's face. But then he had felt certain of her consent.

"That would be difficult. I see you so rarely, that, when I get the chance of a talk, I value it accordingly," admiring the pretty flush he caught again upon the half-averted cheek. "How is it you and that little pupil of yours are never to be seen?"

It was difficult to answer such a question without betraying the harshness and unkindness of her employer to the lonely little child, whose mother was an outcast. The child's grandfather, who lived with the Englefields, and from whom they expected great things, he being Mr. Englefield's uncle, had sent for Maggie about a year ago, from the home her father had found for her, and where her life had been even sadder than it was now. The Englefields had been furious at his sending for her, fearing that he should return to the old affections and leave her the fortune that should have been her mother's. But the old man, beyond sending for her and providing her with a governess, had done nothing more. He never asked to see her, and Mrs. Englefield, knowing the advantage of keeping them apart, did her best to widen the gulf between them. Miss Coleridge saw through it all, and her eyes grew bright and indignant now. The young man wondered what she was thinking of, and thought if she were only decently dressed—like Maysie, for instance—

No! even she could not hold a candle to Maysie. His thoughts, which never

really wandered far from her, returned in full force now.

"It was awfully mean of you hiding yourselves in that cupboard, the other night," he said, with a laugh, which had a touch of self-consciousness in it. He had a strong suspicion that he must have looked rather like a fool. "I hope you weren't found out."

"I hope you weren't," with a malicious light in her eyes.

"No. But could you hear what we said?"

"I—I don't think you said very much," she said, with a gravity which he found suspicious.

"It was an awkward situation," laughing, though he coloured a little. He hated feeling ridiculous, but he had too much good sense to show it. "And it was very good of you not to tell!"

"Did you think I would?" with quick, fine disdain.

"Oh well—of course, I mean, Mrs. Englefield might expect. You know she does not quite approve of our engagement."

She looked at him with sudden pity, faintly touched with scorn.

"What were you going to say?" he asked, a little startled by the look, as she turned away again.

"Nothing. Only—I hope you found the rose. I picked it up after you left."

"Why did you throw it after me, like that?" he asked hastily, moved by her tone, and those old doubts about Lord Maitland.

"I don't know. I did it on the impulse of the moment. It was a pity it broke—" she stopped abruptly. If he were not clever enough to read the warning of that broken flower, she would not explain; while a sudden thought, that he might put an interpretation on the act personal to herself, made her hot with shame. She knew how much he was spoilt by women. He might think she had been only trying to attract him. The fear made her stop. It was time to get rid of him.

"I think I would like you to leave me," she said a little stiffly.

They were close to Grosvenor Walk. Mr. Aylmer thought he understood her reason. He was too much a man of the world not to know that Mrs. Englefield would probably object to her governess walking with even an ineligible like himself.

"As you wish," he said quietly. Then as he looked down into her face, and

noticed its beauty and youth, which a certain delicacy of tint made even more youthful than it was, a sudden sense of her position in the world struck him. Fictitiously independent, yet really totally dependent on her employer's favour and the world's opinion, it seemed a shame not to give her a word of warning. The girls of his world, at her age, would have parents and friends to protect them from the danger of making the acquaintance of disreputable personages.

"You must not be very angry with me," he said, with the gentleness which was one of his most dangerous charms; "but I know what a generous heart will make a person do sometimes for the unfortunate. But you are so young, that, if you were my sister, I could not feel it more my duty to warn you against mixing yourself up with people like Lady Arundel."

"It is very good of you," she interrupted hurriedly, flushing hotly, "but—oh please, let me go! There is Miss Englefield."

She snatched away her hand, and hurried off down a side street, leaving Mr. Aylmer, with the full consciousness that he had been standing, holding Miss Coleridge's hand in the most loverlike fashion, to face Miss Englefield and her mother. He roused himself and walked on towards them. He raised his hat, half-stopping to join them, and met only a cold, steady gaze from Mrs. Englefield, which seemed to pierce, like steel, through his brain. Maymie's face was turned away. He only caught sight of the scarlet blush, which had dyed even her throat; for she was still young enough to be ashamed, and then they passed on.

He stood still, stunned, dazed by this cut direct—society's guillotine, with which she rids herself of useless or inconvenient acquaintance.

The rose had fallen at last.

The little governess's warning had not been a vain one.

CHAPTER III.

THAT same evening he received a note from Mrs. Englefield. It was curt and cruel in the extreme. It forbade him to enter the house again. And the excuse she gave was so utterly ridiculous, so shameless, in its effort to seize upon any trifle to break off the acquaintance, that even he, maddened by rage and pain, could not help laughing.

"A man who could trifle with the affections of a young girl in the dependent

position of Miss Coleridge, tempting her to forget propriety as well as her duty, is not a fit companion for my daughters. I have heard before how much you admired her, and how you seized every opportunity of speaking to her in my house. I did not think, however, that it had arrived at clandestine meetings. Out of pity to Miss Coleridge, I will give her another chance. But you will——"

Here Jack Aylmer uttered a violent imprecation, and tore the note into twenty pieces. Then repenting, with a sudden, foolish wish that the end might be kinder, he picked up the pieces and spent half-an-hour putting them together again. He might have spared himself the trouble.

"And, lest you should not be honourable enough to keep out of Maysie's way, I shall keep the strictest guard over her."

"And she will, too. Not a chance of a letter, or a word, or even a look—don't I know it of old?"

But the worst was to come.

"The dear child herself sees her folly, and has, I am glad to say, consented to marry Lord Maitland."

This was it, then. As if he could not have seen all along! It came upon him now like a flash of light, blinding him with its mortification, and rage, and despair. He had been the cat's-paw. But for him Maitland would never have visited at the house. He had been encouraged till the latter had been secured. Then—he was cast aside as an old glove.

The blow was as great as if such a thing were unheard of, instead of happening every day in his world. He would have gone straight off to Maitland that night, but remembered that he had started for abroad the same day, called away by the dangerous illness of a near relation. Then he remembered, too, that Maitland was a faithful friend and an honourable man after his powers; and besides, Maitland did not know that there had been this half engagement between them. For Maysie's sake, Aylmer had kept it even from his friend.

Then his wrath fell upon the innocent cause of his trouble, and his anger was as hot against Miss Coleridge as if his being found with her had been the real cause of Mrs. Englefield's treatment of him. He forgot the youth and loveliness which had excited his pity; he forgot the innocent eyes which had tempted him to become her protector; he forgot everything, except that it was only her almost remarkable

likeness to Maysie, which had attracted him at all, at least, so it seemed to him now.

"I always told Maysie that I only admired her because she was the same height and had just the same colouring, and to think that that little governess has got me into this trouble, when I was only doing my best to serve her!" he groaned between whiffs at the cigar, to which solace he had resorted in the depths of his despair.

But as the dark, weary hours dragged themselves into the light of the morning, he grew more hopeful. He would not give Maysie up without one fight for her. He would see her once, at least, to find out if this were really her will as well as her mother's. If fate and Mrs. Englefield proved too much for him, he would appeal to his friend's generosity. He would tell him how matters had stood between himself and Maysie, and pray from him the right and opportunity of an interview; "just to know the truth from her own lips."

Aylmer was not a man to hesitate when he had made up his mind. He would have walked up to a cannon's mouth if need had arisen, without a glance behind, and this cool pluck he carried into every affair of his life. From that moment began a kind of silent skirmishing between him and Mrs. Englefield. The season was at its height. Balls, dinners, receptions, out-of-door fêtes, followed each other every hour. Jack Aylmer, detrimental as he was as far as fortune was concerned, was asked, by virtue of his connections and their social position, everywhere.

Wherever he had a chance of meeting the Englefields he went. He kept a watch on every moment, in case it should contain the opportunity he wanted. But Mrs. Englefield was prepared for the attack, and mounted guard with such effect that he never advanced a single step towards the treasure she protected.

Maysie, herself, either through fear of her mother, or a heartless coquetry, never helped him. If she did not cut him, she did as badly. She would smile and bow to him when they met, and then fling herself into the flirtations and excitement of the hour, without another glance in his direction. She obeyed her mother, by never giving him a dance, and as they never met except in the brilliant crowds of social gatherings, where she was always either surrounded by friends or partners, or was guarded by her mother, the opportunity of

appealing to her heart, in which he still believed in, never came. A week went by, and Aylmer grew desperate. Maitland was still away. Sometimes he was tempted to write, but the impossibility of putting what he felt on paper, stopped him. Besides, he was reluctant to try this last resource. Chivalry, which his worldly training had not yet wholly destroyed in a naturally generous heart, forbade him exposing Maysie, as he must necessarily do, if he appealed to the help of her accepted lover. He had written once or twice to her, but the letters had been returned. Whether she had even seen them, he could not tell. Sometimes the thought came to him, to make a confidante of some woman of their mutual acquaintance. But here his strong fear of ridicule made him give up the idea. He felt that he had been so shamelessly duped, that he did not like anyone else to know how hard he had been hit. Besides, his reputation for success in his flirtations, which, as with many other men of his temperament, was a source of pride to him, would suffer. These successful flirtations had been, in some sort of a way, a cynical revenge which he had taken on Society for its ill-concealed opinion that, though he was a valuable addition to its entertainments, he was totally outside the pale of its more serious matrimonial business. He did not feel inclined to openly acknowledge that once again Society had played with him—this time to his heart's bleeding.

No—there was not one of these women he could go to. One morning, just about this time, he happened to be wandering, depressed and bitter, down a long, straight street, in a quarter, which, while not reckoned one of the most fashionable, was still much frequented by rich people, who, if not in the first circles of Society, thought a good deal of themselves. Jack Aylmer who had been walking half unconsciously, was suddenly aroused to a sense of where he was, by seeing a young lady and a little girl standing before one of the houses looking into the dining-room window. He recognised them at once. The figure of the elder girl, at the first moment, recalled so vividly Maysie Englefield. They were apparently absorbed in contemplation of something, and did not stir till he reached them. He then saw that they were admiring a very fine parrot, placed at the open window, who, through the bars of his cage, was also contemplating them with some favour.

"Good morning! Miss Coleridge," he said raising his hat, very much amused at

the two interested faces, the pretty governess looking only a little older child than her pupil. She turned with a start, all the light dying out of her face. Then with a very severe little bow, she took the child's hand, "We must go home now, Maggie," she said.

"Good-bye, Polly!" cried the child. "But we are coming again to-morrow."

The young man stood for a second, looking after them. "Poor little soul!" he thought with half-amused pity. "She must have got it hot, to give a fellow a bow like that. Ah!"

A sudden thought seized him. Why should not she help him? It was through her partly, that he lost Maysie. She had a tender little heart, witness her visiting that wretched woman, and her kindness to this poor neglected child—nay, even to himself. He could not help it; a sudden recollection of her tossing him that rose, came back to him. He was not conceited enough to think that she had fallen in love with him out and out, but it was only natural, that a girl, in the dull life she lived, should wish to attract his attention. He had been civil to her when they met, and perhaps—Jack Aylmer was accustomed to his civilities, accompanied as they were by such great beauty of person, being taken to mean more than they did.

What if he made friends with the little governess and persuaded her to help him, either by giving a letter direct into Maysie's hands, or speaking for him?

The more he thought of it, the more feasible it seemed. He stood there so long thinking over it that a prim-faced little old maid, who lived alone in that great house, and who had grown quite to look out for that sweet-faced little governess and her child-charge, as they came every day to look at her parrot, stepped out from behind the curtains where she was hiding, to see what he was about.

Catching sight of her, and recalled to the position, Jack Aylmer walked on.

"Oh! you sneak!" called out the parrot, who, with head on one side, had also been contemplating him with less favour than it had shown for its previous audience. Aylmer caught the words, and though they were but meaningless chatter, he actually started for a second, as he caught it.

"I hope he isn't, Polly! I hope he isn't," said the old maid, shaking her head. "But there's no accounting for such good-looking young men. And that pretty little governess is such a child! We must look after her, Polly."

OUR CONVENT.

"WOULDEST thou know what true peace and quiet mean; wouldst thou find a refuge from the noises and clamours of the multitude, come with me into a Quaker's meeting."

No, Charles Lamb; amongst your Quakers, no doubt, you find peace and quiet; but there is a peace more profound, a quiet more intense, than you have ever known, for you have not lived in a Convent.

I don't remember who first suggested that I should go into a Convent; but, whoever it was, at the time I put the idea aside as absurd. However, after a few weeks of bustling, noisy, hotel life in the most depressing part of the Riviera, my imagination began to endow the peace of Convent life with charms that each day became more irresistible; and before long I found myself treasuring, as a talisman that would put an end to all my annoyances, my letter of introduction to the Lady Superior of a Convent in a little Italian town, a few miles from the French frontier.

I had left England worn out in body and mind, and, as I knew that some months must elapse before there would be any chance of my being able to return, my heart sank at the prospect of passing the time in the midst of this caravanserai of invalids, and I was ready to welcome as a blessing anything that would ensure deliverance from the daily table d'hôte, and the rattling, ever-arriving omnibus.

At length, one evening, driven to despair by the arrival at the hotel of another half-dozen invalids, I wrote to the Lady Superior and asked if she would receive me as a pensionnaire. Her reply manifested none of that alacrity to welcome me which I had expected; in fact, it was only after some Catholic friends of mine had brought all their influence to bear upon the head of the Order in Paris, that the required permission was sent.

It was about seven o'clock one evening in January that I arrived at Turgia. For one second, when the heavy gate swung back behind me as I entered, and I heard the click of the self-revolving lock, my heart throbbed nervously; nor did the sight of some dozen figures clothed in long flowing robes, their faces partially hidden by black veils, tend to restore my courage. There was something strange and un-

canny in those silent forms, flitting up and down the long, white corridor. But this feeling vanished in a moment, for the Lady Superior hurried forward to bid me welcome; and no gloomy foreboding could resist the charm of her manner.

She was a tiny little lady, scarcely five feet in height, with delicate features and white hair. She spoke in a singularly gentle voice that reminded me of a little bell, it was so clear and distinct, and yet so low; it might have been monotonous if less sweet, but as it was, it seemed to have a strange power of lulling to sleep all irritation. Her manner had all the subtle charm which is the peculiar heritage of well-born Frenchwomen; for she and all her Order were of that nation, and have only established themselves across the frontier to escape the persecution of the Republican Government. There was such a true ring of motherly friendliness in her welcome, that I soon felt quite at home, and was able to pay proper attention to the exquisite little dinner that had been prepared for me. This I ate alone, for it seemed to be contrary to the regulations of the establishment for the Sisters to eat with strangers. Still, one or two of them never failed to come and keep me company during my repasts just, as they said, to prevent my feeling lonely.

As soon as dinner was over, the Lady Superior took me to my own little cottage, a most charming abode, built by the side of the Convent. It was here that the Bishop of the Diocese was lodged when he paid his pastoral visits to the neighbourhood; for, as I afterwards discovered, the same prohibition applied to him as to me—the one as a man, though a Bishop, the other as a Protestant, though a woman, might not sleep under the same roof as the Sisters.

It was some days before I became accustomed to the quaint routine of Convent life. At first, the little bells, which at all sorts of odd times and seasons summoned the Sisters to prayer, used to startle me; but I soon learnt to know them, and they added not a little to the charm of the place. There was something soothing in watching that little black crowd—there were only twenty-five Sisters—rise at the first stroke, and, as if moved by some common impulse which bound all their actions in a bond of perfect harmony, make their way slowly to the little chapel. Then, too, the gentle click of their rosaries as they walked slowly up and down the

garden, counting their beads and speaking not one word, though they might be there for the hour together, ushered in a peace ineffable. During the three months I was there, I never saw a hurried gesture, or heard an angry word; from first to last, life pursued its smooth, untroubled course—sleepy if you like, but oh, so peaceful! As you entered you seemed to leave the world behind you; try as it might, it could not make its way through those iron bars. Inside there was a sort of atmospheric pressure, which lulled to sleep all cares and troubles; little worldly anxieties looked petty when viewed in the presence of those women, whose lives were set apart from all things worldly; and politics had an absurdly false ring within the convent walls. I remember, one day, by some chance I brought a newspaper in with me, and I was amused to find myself discovering that its great crackling sheets were almost vulgar, and the thought of reading it in the Convent, a sacrilege.

The Convent is built high up on a hill-side, and is surrounded by a large garden. At the foot of the hill, some few hundred yards beyond the garden, is the Mediterranean, which sparkles and glitters with a thousand colours, as the sun lights up its dark azure with splendour; whilst above the Convent, the grey-green olive-groves stand out against the clear bright sky. As I laid in that garden, I used often to wonder if any place on the earth could be more lovely. I doubt it.

The garden itself, with its rows of tiny terraces, inclining full south, was a marvel of nature and art. Protected from all cold winds, its flowers assumed a more brilliant hue than those grown elsewhere. A great hedge, tall as a man, of creeping heliotrope, filled the air with fragrant perfume; an orange grove ran down one side; on the other, crimson roses and tall lilies vied with each other in beauty. To me, accustomed to grey London skies and all the formal ugliness of a town, the mere fact of living in such a place was happiness, and made my every nerve thrill with pleasure. Then the charm of the society of those gentle ladies, their very remoteness from the world, seemed to increase it; and the absence of all masculine influence lent to it a peculiar attraction. People, of course, they could not speak of; as to news, they did not know the meaning of the word; but, in their long hours of silence they had matured a delicate concentration of thought which I have never encountered elsewhere.

They startled me sometimes by their quaint aphorisms, and by the subtle distinctions they would draw; it was as if by solitude their minds were become pure as a crystal which, catching the various rays around, reflects them back, illumined with new splendour. I never knew how shallow and superficial I was, how confused was my mind, how unsettled were my principles, until I talked with them.

Although the lives and minds of these good Sisters seemed to move as one harmonious whole, here, as elsewhere, the harmony was the result of diversity, not of uniformity. The Lady Superior's sweetness was never more attractive than when contrasted with the sterner, harder character of her predecessor. This lady had been the head of the community for some years, when the loss of her hearing obliged her to resign her position. Without a moment's hesitation she cheerfully accepted her fate, and insisted upon remaining in the same Convent in a subordinate character. By birth she was a Corsican, and more than once, whilst she was describing the wrongs or sufferings of others, I have seen her eyes flash with a fire of which we colder Northerners are incapable. She had been in Paris during the war, at which time the Convent there had been turned into a hospital, and her face used to light up with enthusiasm as she spoke of the heroic patience with which the wounded men had borne their sufferings. She herself was one of a family of warriors, and, I should say, shared to the full the warlike ardour of her race, though in her it was softened and purified into a longing to help, not to avenge, others.

But of all the inhabitants of the Convent, none appealed to me so strongly as Sister Marie Augustine. In my life I have never seen a more perfect face and form: even the nun's dress could not conceal their beauty. Tall and slight, her every gesture was queenly; her eyes were large and of the deepest violet; her delicate patrician features would have been almost too statuesque in their perfect loveliness, if it had not been for the rich lips, and the clear bright colour of her cheeks, which glowed with perfect health. She played the organ with a skill that proved her an accomplished musician; English and Italian, as well as French she spoke with ease, and I often wondered what could have driven her from a world where she was so well fitted to play a brilliant part. I never dared to ask, but

later I heard accidentally that, immediately before she entered the Convent, she had passed some time at Court as maid of honour to the Empress Eugénie. Had she started back in horror from a world such as she learnt to know it there? Or had some tragedy frightened her away?

Sister Elisabeth was the woman who, intellectually, would be ranked first in a Convent. In any sphere she would have been counted as a distinguished woman. She belonged by birth, as by talent, to a family of lawyers, and it was an endless source of amusement to me to watch her as she sat, perfectly motionless, with her hands clasped together, arguing with lawyer-like acumen some point in dispute. I once did venture to ask her what could have induced her to enter a Convent. For anyone who knew the woman the naïveté of her confession was charming.

In the olden days, before Elisabeth was born, an aunt of hers, the only sister of her mother, had excited the undying enmity of her family by becoming a nun. The home atmosphere being decidedly anti-clerical, this aunt had been held up as an object of the strongest reprobation to Elisabeth's childish imagination; and, from her earliest infancy, it had been impressed upon her by her mother that the one thing she must not do was to become a nun. As her mind was decidedly of the combative order, the natural result of this system of training was that, as soon as she arrived at an age to take the initiative, she began to regard Convent-life somewhat in the light of a forbidden pleasure. Noticing this, her family redoubled their threats and warnings, with the result that, as soon as she attained her majority, she entered a Convent. She was the only one of the Sisters who ever discussed theology with me. The others, with a sort of innate courtesy, tacitly ignored the fact that I was not of the same persuasion as they.

Then there was Sister Blandine, a delicate, consumptive girl, who seemed to be fading away before our eyes. She had lately joined the community; but even Convent life cannot heal a broken heart, and her story, as her fate, was written only too clearly on her face.

Sister Octavie, who was nearly ninety, was the only one who seemed to regret the outside world. If she saw me at my window, with a significant nod she would point to her chaplet. I knew well what was meant; as soon as her string of prayers was said, she would come and pay me a

visit. And then the speed with which she would rattle through those beads, so as not to miss her chat! For, as I soon discovered, their vow of silence was allowed to yield place to their sense of hospitality. I soon knew the history of her life, if life it could be called. She was brought up in a Convent, and when her education was complete, at the request of her friends (no dowry, and therefore no husband, having been found) she took the veil. She could not remember having walked in a street in her life! With this was connected her greatest earthly disappointment. Some three years before I met her, she had been sent from Dijon to the then new Convent at Turgia. The journey, about forty hours, (it is contrary to their rule to travel express) she went through without stopping, sustained, as she in a moment of confidence told me, by the hope of just for once traversing the streets on foot. But, alas for the frailty of human hopes! The Lady Superior, knowing nothing of the secret longing of Octavie's soul, rashly deciding that a woman of more than eighty, at the end of such a journey, would be only too glad to drive, sent a close carriage to meet her at the railway station. There were tears in the poor old woman's eyes as she said to me: "And now I shall never walk in a street."

Then there was Sister Christine, who sang like an angel; and Sister Bernadine, who was preparing for Mission work in Africa; the others I only knew by sight. I seem to see them still, sitting up and down the silent terraces. Are they happy, I often wonder. I think they are; at least as far as they knew the meaning of the word. In these days of altruism one cannot call their life ideal; but surely it is not altogether wasted, for are not those gentle Sisters teaching a lesson of tender peace and love, and offering to those who seek it, a safe and sure refuge from the noises and clamours of the world?

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

BUTE AND DUMBARTON.

BETWEEN the classic shore of Ayr and the long, lone promontory of Kintyre lies the Isle of Arran, an outlying morsel of the Highlands. A delightful island with wild Alpine scenery, and a bold rocky coast, partly encompassed with a rim or

margin of lower ground which forms a charming marine terrace, that has the appearance of a raised sea-beach. Between this terrace and the rocky barrier behind it, lie cliffs and caverns, rifts and wooded dells, with brooks rushing down in foaming cascades, and pleasant valleys, where winter frosts and snows rarely penetrate—a country of soft mists and wild showers, and bright sunny gleams, full of contrast and charm. Although the mountains rise to no great height compared with Alpine summits, yet their grand bulk and rugged outline, as they rise sheer from the level of the waves, give an impression of grandeur and sublimity. The chief summit, known as Goat Fell, bears in Gaelic the more impressive title of Gaioth Cheinn (The Mountain of Winds), and well deserves the title, as it rears its massive front to the wild Atlantic gales.

Although Arran, like most of the western isles, underwent a period of subjugation to the Scandinavian hordes, yet it never lost its Gaelic character. The legends of the island are those of the Gael—of Fiunn Maccoul, his battles and his victories. Ossian ended his days at Kilmorie, according to island tradition, and missionaries from the neighbouring coast of Ireland made of Arran another island of the saints.

The lordship of the island eventually fell to the Stewarts through a marriage with a female descendant of the mighty Somerled, and from this circumstance it happens that Arran, with other isles that dot the Firth of Clyde—the Cumbræes Great and Little, Inchmarnock, and Pladda—all of which, at one time or other, owned the Stewarts as lords, were united with Bute to form a separate county. Holy Island, too, must be added, a little satellite of Arran lying in Lamlash Bay, which takes its name from an eremitic settlement of holy men, founded by Molios—the name signifies in Gaelic one who had adopted the tonsure of Jesus—a disciple of Columba, who found the lonely island of Iona too gay and festive for his taste, and so retired to complete solitude in this isle, which had no other occupants than the sea-birds. The cave in which he lived is still to be seen, and is adorned with certain Runic inscriptions; while a raised slab of rock, without any luxurious adaptations to the human frame, such as the sybarites of Iona sometimes indulged in, is pointed out as the bed of the saint. His bath, too, is in existence—and it is a redeeming feature in

his case that he did not allow himself the luxury of dirt—and this was once much resorted to by pilgrims from all parts, while all kinds of cures were effected by a dip in the holy man's bath. In later times a small monastery was built upon the island; and when the monastery fell to ruins, the graveyard was still made use of by the people of the main isle; till one day a funeral party were caught in a sudden storm on the passage and all drowned, after which there were no more burials on Holy Isle.

On Arran itself are many memorials of an earlier civilisation than our own: memorial stones; Druidic circles; cinerary urns; cairns which enclose the bones of mighty men of old; forts which have been held by tribe against tribe, in the ages of stone and of bronze. Among the latter is the Doon, a vast primeval fortress protected on the seaward side by cliffs three hundred feet high. Nor are relics of a golden age altogether wanting. Here and there have come to light the golden torques and collars for which Ireland was once so famous—although such finds are more likely to have reached the melting pot than the museum.

The island is still full of the memory of the Bruce. The King's cave, among the rocks on the shore of the island opposite Campbelltown in Kintyre, is said to have sheltered the Bruce and his followers when landed from their winter retreat at Rachrin on the Irish coast; and here James Douglas, a fugitive like the King, recognised the King's presence by the winding of his horn.

Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,
If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!

From Brodick Bay, on the other side of the island, King Robert set sail for his own land of Carrick, encouraged by the signal fire that blazed from Turnberry Point, on the opposite coast of Ayr. The old castle of Brodick, that witnessed all this, still remains, an unlucky castle for defence, if its annals are correctly written. First James Douglas stormed it, and put its English garrison to the sword, before his meeting with the Bruce. A century later, in the Douglas wars, it fell into the hands of Balloch of the Isles, who plundered Arran, and laid it waste, as it was then the private domain of the Stuarts. Again, nearly a century afterwards, that is A.D. 1544, the castle was attacked and dismantled by the Earl of Lennox, who came with English ships on

an expedition against his native land. Another century elapsed, and then Cromwell sent a garrison of eighty men to Brodick and ordered a stout bastion to be built for its defence—a bastion which still exists, and forms a principal part of the ancient edifice. Here were the saints once more in the Island of the Saints, but they hardly behaved as such. Anyhow, the Highland tradition goes that the strangers found the daughters of the land too fair for their peace of mind and good manners, and that, jealous of their behaviour, the islanders rose upon them, cut them off from their castle, and slew them everyone. Again a century passed away, or nearly, and in 1746, although there was no question of defending the castle, yet the redcoat lads with black cockades were searching everywhere for fugitive Jacobites, one of whom, the Hon. Charles Boyd, was concealed on Auchcliffin Farm, till he found a chance of escaping to France. This was a younger son of the Lord Kilmarnock, who had suffered not long before on Tower Hill.

Since those days, however, the Highland element in the population of Arran has been much reduced. The Gael has gone westward—man by man, family by family—sometimes, as in 1830, in large parties. In that year there was a general emigration to Canada and Chaleur Bay. Lowland cultivators have taken the place of Highland cottars, and under assiduous cultivation the land is quickly losing the traces of earlier and ruder times.

Crossing the Sound of Bute, the blue mountains of Arran, rising in their grand bulk from the placid, land-locked sea, form an impressive and noble object as we look behind us. It is the scene which met the eyes of Bruce and his followers, as having dragged their galleys over the narrow neck of land at Tarbet, they steered for Arran's Isle:

The sun, ere yet he sunk behind
Ben Ghoil, the Mountain of the Wind,
Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
And bade Loch Ranra smile.

Still, under summer skies, there is no more lovely scene than this, beheld under the effects of a glowing sunset.

Each puny wave in diamonds rolled
O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold
With azure strove and green.
The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
Glowed with the tints of evening's hour,
The beach was silver sheen.

The tower, perhaps, whose ruins rise above Loch Ranra, was not in existence in Bruce's days, being an old hunting seat

of the earlier Stuarts, with whom the Isle of Arran was a favourite resort. It was James the Second who alienated the islands of Bute and Arran, and bestowed them in dower upon his eldest sister, the Princess Margaret, on her marriage with Sir Thomas Boyd. The marriage was not a success; and the Princess was divorced, and bestowed, with her magnificent dowry, upon Sir James, the chief of the Hamiltons, who, by deserting his patron the Douglas on the eve of battle, had probably saved the King's crown, and so earned this large reward—large, that is, in landed endowments; whether the Princess herself turned out reward or punishment, does not appear on record. Perhaps if Hamilton had boasted of having married the eldest sister of the King, he might have been met with the rejoinder that, if the King had had one older still, he would have given her to him. Anyhow, this historic episode accounts for the extensive possessions of the Hamiltons in the county of Bute.

Right in the track for the Kyles of Bute is the small, low-lying Inchmarnock, the last retreat of the saint, whose anchorite's cell gave its name to Kilmarnock, on the adjoining mainland of Ayr. The Kyles themselves resemble rather a winding, placid river than an arm of the sea, and Bute is distinguished more for mild and pastoral beauty than for any striking features. Rothesay, the capital of the county and island, is the chief watering-place of the Firth of Clyde, generally packed with visitors in the summer time, and a favourite residence with Glasgow people all the year round. Along all the adjoining shores, indeed, the villas and mansions of the cotton and iron lords are thickly planted. Swarms of yachts, of pleasure boats and skiffs, ride at anchor in the Firth, and are harboured in every nook and cranny along the shore. And thus the ancient fame of Rothesay—which gave the title of Duke to the heir of the Stuart line, a title now borne by the Prince of Wales as their representative—and its ancient history, seem of little account in comparison with the interests of the day. The castle is fine and fairly well preserved; an ancient seat of the Stuarts, before the island passed out of their direct lordship. Its present ruined state is due to the Earl of Argyle, or anyhow to his partisans, who set fire to the castle and burned all that would burn in the course of the unfortunate rising of 1685, the result of

which brought the Earl and many of his friends to the scaffold.

At one time Bute was the scene of considerable traffic with the Highlands. A series of ferries crossing the Firth from Argyle to Bute, from Bute to Cumbræes Isles, and then to the neighbouring shores of Ayrshire, formed the easiest and most expeditious route from the Western Highlands to Galloway, and the English borders. Thus Bute was considered neutral ground, neither Highland nor Lowland, where all might meet at fair or market without mistrust or national jealousy.

The Firth of Clyde, upon which we are now embarked, was once better known as the Firth of Dumbarton. For when Glasgow was a mere kirk-town—a seat of learning indeed and of ecclesiastical dignity, but without wealth or commerce, and of no military importance—Dumbarton lorded it over the whole firth, in virtue of its royal castle, one of the strongholds of the realm, and its royal burgh ranking with the most ancient and illustrious municipalities of the period.

The history of Dumbarton ascends to the dim and mythic Celtic period of Arthur and his Knights, of Merlin wild, and the legends of the Table Round. It is Dinas-y-Brython, the fortress of the Briton, and was known earlier still as Alclwyd, as which it figures in the poems of Ossian, and among the legends of Fiunn, the Gael. Here, too, was probably a frontier post under the Roman occupation, for hereabouts ended the so-called Wall of Antoninus, the extreme mark of Roman domination in Britain; and no doubt the facilities of defence on all sides, and of access from the sea, marked out the rock of Dumbarton as the site of a strong fortress. It is probable that the whole county of Dumbarton represents a portion of the ancient British Kingdom of Strathclyde, which stretched as far as the waters of Loch Lomond. For the district still bears in an altered form its ancient British name—not Gaelic at all, but Welsh. It was the Llanerch or plain; the wedge of cultivated country surrounded by the hills and waters; and as the Lennox it is still known—the origin of a title which has been noted, if not illustrious, in the annals of Scotland and England.

The first known Lord of Lennox was no Norman Knight, but a true-born Englishman. Among the Northumbrian chiefs who went into exile rather than submit to the Norman invader, was one

Arkil, son of Egfrith, on whom King Malcolm, mindful of what he owed the Northumbrian chiefs in that affair of Macbeth, bestowed the Lordship of Lennox. Alwyn, the grandson of Arkil, was first known as Earl of Lennox, who died A.D. 1160, and from that time to the reign of Charles the Second, the line ran on by male or female descent. The Earl of Lennox was naturally the guardian of Dumbarton Burgh and Castle, that is, when he could be trusted, for such an important stronghold was often confided to someone specially appointed by the King.

The burgh itself was well qualified to look after its own interests. Its privileges were acknowledged by Alexander the Second in a charter dated 1221. But about forty years later the very existence of the town was endangered by a most formidable Scandinavian invasion. Haco, King of Norway, with a powerful fleet and a terrible force of yellow-haired warriors from all parts, appeared in the Firth of Clyde. Magnus, King of Man, was serving under the orders of his brother monarch of Norway, and all the vassal chiefs of the Hebrides were with him. The terrified inhabitants of Lennox took refuge, with all their moveable belongings, upon the islands in Loch Lomond, and having secured all the boats in the loch, awaited the event in tolerable security. But the King of Man passed up Loch Long with sixty galleys, and reaching the head of the loch, the Norsemen dragged their galleys across the narrow isthmus that divides the sea water from the fresh, and then launching their craft in Loch Lomond, descended exultingly upon the defenceless islands. Then followed terrible slaughter, fire and pillage, till, sated with destruction and loaded with booty, the Scandinavians returned by the way they had come, and rejoined the main body of the fleet. Happily for the Scotch Kingdom, a great storm scattered Haco's fleet, and the battle of Largs, fought on the Ayrshire coast, completed the ruin of the invaders.

Through all these troubles the Castle of Dumbarton seems to have held out. The rock was held to be impregnable in the days before gunpowder; but, seen from the Clyde, it has rather a pleasant than a formidable appearance—a sturdy, double-headed rock, with grassy, sloping terraces and ivy-covered walls. On the lower ground behind it lies the town, shrouded in a sultry reek; for Dumbarton is now a manufacturing and shipbuilding centre, and

the clang of hammers and boiler-plates may be heard all day long. It is difficult to realise that this homely-looking fortress, little more than a pleasant retreat for war-worn veterans, could ever have held the fate of Scotland in its hands. But it is said that at the time when the succession to the Crown was disputed, and it seemed an even chance whether Douglas or Stuart should prevail, the Governor of Dumbarton turned the scale by declaring for the Stuarts, as the rhyming chronicle of Wynton relates.

Robert Stewart was made King
Specially throw the helping
Of gude Sir Robert of Erskine,
That Edinburgh, Dumbarton, and Striveling,
Had in his keeping.

For one thing, Dumbarton was nearly always open to communication with Scotland's ancient ally of France. The Firth of Forth was often blockaded by English ships of war; and even were the firth open, the ships of the French, sailing from the naval depôts on the Seine, would have to run the gauntlet of the Straits of Dover and the Cinque Ports, whence armed vessels were always ready to sally forth. But the west coast of England was far less efficiently guarded, and with an east wind—and there is no reason to believe that such a wind blew less persistently then than now, although we hear less about it in the chronicles of the period—the passage is as easy, and not much longer, from the Seine to the Clyde, as to the eastern Forth.

Anyhow, by way of Dumbarton often came supplies from France in the way of arms, wine, and general merchandise, and very opportunely at times. The Stuarts seem to have had friendly relations with France, even when only High Stewards of the Kingdom. Perhaps their official functions had something to do with providing good wine of Bordeaux for the Royal household, and so they had established friendly commercial relationship with the merchants of France. At all events, in the later Baliol wars, in the time of Edward the Third of England, when Robert Stewart held Dumbarton, and captured the Castle of Dunoon from the enemy, he received arms and supplies from France.

Another incident shows Dumbarton in its capacity of State prison. King David the Second had been a prisoner for eleven years in England, after the battle of Neville's Cross; at first in close captivity in the Tower, but afterwards at greater

liberty at Odiham Castle in Hampshire. This liberty he employed in winning the affections of a charming girl from Wales, one Catherine Mortimer. The lady accompanied the King on his return to his dominions; but the rude nobility of Scotland took umbrage at the distinction with which Catherine was treated, and the Earl of Angus was deputed to abate the grievance, which he did most effectually by waylaying and putting to death the unfortunate young woman. For this crime he was sent a prisoner to Dumbarton, and there the matter would have ended, had not a visitation of the plague in the following year carried off both prisoners and gaolers.

Another curious episode in the history of Dumbarton Castle is its being held by a priest, one Walter de Danyelstone, during the Regency of Robert, Duke of Albany. The priest, who no doubt had some authority from the King to command the castle, refused to give it up to Albany except to be made Bishop of St. Andrews, and the bargain was actually made and carried out. There would have been nothing extraordinary in such an arrangement on behalf of a fighting priest in the thirteenth century; but in the fifteenth, it certainly strikes one as remarkable. About this time the succession to the honours of Lennox ended in a woman, the Lady Isabel, who eventually married Murdoch, Duke of Albany, the son and successor of the above Robert, but who, gifted with a temper too amiable and placable for the times, came to a bad end upon the heading hill at Stirling. The widowed Lady Isabel returned to her own country and lived for many years in retirement in Inchmurren, an islet in Loch Lomond, where stood one of the family seats. Judging from the remains at present existing, the Lady Isabel's household accommodation must have been very limited; but we are told that she lived here in some state, surrounded by relations and dependants; and we can only conjecture that following generations were at some pains to convey away the building materials, or, as is more probable, that much of her Ladyship's dwelling was a mere temporary erection of wood and thatch. But, anyhow, Lady Isabel's name has come down to us as that of a pious and charitable woman, who founded the Collegiate Church of Dumbarton, and devoted much of her means to pious uses.

On the death of this distinguished lady, the Darnley branch of the Lennox family

claimed, and eventually obtained, the Earldom and the greater part of its possessions; and this line of Earls of Lennox ran on indifferently well, with a general character for stoutness, wisdom, and valour, till on the death of James the Fifth we find Matthew, then Earl of Lennox, in possession of the fortress of Dumbarton, and expecting the arrival of the French fleet with arms and reinforcements for the support of the cause of the Queen-mother, Mary of Guise. But before the fleet arrived, Lennox had changed his mind. He recognised the great wealth and power of England under King Henry the Eighth; and he judged probably that the English monarch's plan of obtaining possession of the person of the infant Queen and bringing her up under English influences as a wife for his son Edward was really the best arrangement for both nations. Thus he fled to the English Court, and was rewarded by King Henry with the hand of his niece, the Lady Margaret Douglas. Presently Lennox was entrusted with the command of an expedition against his native land. He sailed from Bristol with twelve ships fitted out at that port, and, after visiting Arran, came to the Firth of Dumbarton and demanded admittance as its lawful Governor.

But the Commander of the castle refused to admit the Earl, who, finding the castle too strong for attack, departed as he came, and returned to Bristol. Soon after the French fleet arrived with "two thousand gunnaris, three hundred barbit horse, two hundred archeris of the gaird," besides a plentiful supply of silver crowns, all which were landed at Dumbarton, and were very comforting to the French party in Scotland.

Then some three years afterwards the little Queen Mary arrived at Dumbarton on her way to France. Bluff King Harry was now nearing his end, and perhaps the watch kept upon the Scottish coast was somewhat relaxed; but still it was found impossible to embark the prisoners in the Forth, where Monsieur de Villegaignon was lying with a French fleet. But it was arranged that he should steal round the northern coast with four galleys, and so he passed the stormy Pentland Firth, and reached Dumbarton in safety. Villegaignon and the Seneschal of Normandy, Mons. de Brézé, received the little child on board with all respect. There was a touching parting between mother and daughter on the grassy sward beneath the

castle. The child was only just recovering from an attack of small-pox—perhaps it was only the chicken-pox after all, for the beauty of her features and complexion struck all beholders—she wept long and silently, as the convoy sailed away. It was a sorrowful beginning for a life destined to be full of sorrow.

Many years elapsed, and Lennox was still an exile in England, well satisfied indeed with the state of an English nobleman wedded to a Princess of the Royal house. His son Henry had inherited the physical perfections and moral defects of Stuart, Douglas, and Tudor, and the young widowed Queen of France and Scotland, who had lately returned to her own realm, bethought her that a match with this splendid-looking youth might reconcile both inclination and policy. And thus, in 1563, the long-exiled Lennox was "relaxit fra the proces of our souerane lady's home," and permitted to revisit his ancestral estates, bringing with him his son for the approval of his Royal mistress.

But all this has little to do with our castle at Dumbarton, and yet the destinies of Earl and Queen and Castle were somehow mixed up together. For after Darnley's murder, and when the Queen had just escaped from Loch Leven, it was in the foolish attempt to reach the Castle of Dumbarton that the Queen's party suffered the fatal defeat of Langside. The castle held out for the Queen even after she had become a captive in England, but was taken at last by a daring escalade. Amongst the prisoners was Archbishop Hamilton, the last of the Abbots of Paisley, who had hastily donned helmet and shirt of mail in the alarm of the assault. The Archbishop was forthwith hanged at Stirling by the Confederate Lords. But the Hamiltons had an old-fashioned sense of the strictness of family ties and of the duty of blood revenge, and Lennox, who was then Regent, fell soon after in the raid of Stirling, a victim to the shade of the Archbishop.

Another notable prisoner at Dumbarton was the Regent Morton, who fell a victim to his political enemies, ostensibly for being "art and part" in the murder of Henry Darnley; and after this we do not hear much about Dumbarton till the days of the Covenant, when the Castle was seized by the Covenanting Provost of the burgh, who obtained possession of it by a simple but ingenious stratagem. The Governor of the Castle, according to custom,

attended service one Sunday at the town kirk. Provost Sempill waited upon His Excellency, and requested the favour of his company to dinner. The Governor hesitated, but the Provost insisted, and Sir William was hustled into the Provost's lodgings and quickly made to see that he was a prisoner. The keys of the castle were taken from him; the countersign obtained under threat of instant death; and in the dusk of the evening, one of the Covenanting party, dressed in the garb which had been stripped from the unfortunate Governor, presented himself at the castle postern with a few friends, gave the word, was admitted with due respect, and forthwith took possession for the Lords of the Covenant. The castle changed hands again but was in the possession of the Covenanters after the battle of Philiphaugh, when a number of Irish prisoners were cruelly put to death there. But the importance of the castle as a military fort was even then only of a sentimental nature; and although by the treaty of union, a garrison must always be maintained there, yet it hardly ranks as a serious defence of the Firth of Clyde.

As well as the old house of Lennox, the Colquhouns have had an important share in local history, and their annals are diversified with feuds and battles with neighbouring Highland clans. One of the most fatal of these contests was a battle in Glen Fruin, with the wild Macgregors early in the seventeenth century, when the Colquhouns were defeated with a loss of over a hundred fighting men. A number of scholars from the Free School of Dumbarton, it is said, had come out to see the fight, and were set upon by some of the Macgregors and slain in cold blood. It is due, however, to the latter clan, who were gallant fellows after all, although harried and worried by all the powers of the State, to record that the foul deed was indignantly repudiated by the clan in general, and that the perpetrators were outlawed even by the outlawed Macgregors themselves.

But the Vale of Leven has more peaceful memories than these. Here was the birth-place and early home of Tobias Smollett, the author of "Roderick Random" and "Peregrine Pickle," who was descended from a family of lairds long established in the neighbourhood of Dumbarton. And in the portraits of Matthew Bramble and his family, the novelist is said to have reproduced the lineaments of his own family connections.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

BY LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcotes*," etc.

CHAPTER III.

SOME ten minutes after the cab had rolled out of sight and hearing, there came a young man that way—a young man who looked about him as one to whom the scene was familiar.

He had a brisk, cheerful air, and he softly hummed a popular melody under his breath. He looked as if the world went well with him; as if he dined satisfactorily every night of his life, and went to a theatre afterwards. In the meantime he was going to "five o'clock," as he would have phrased it, with Mrs. Popham; and, if one might judge from his walk, he did not face the prospect reluctantly. But then Fred Temple was always ready to enter any door that led to society. Society is confessedly not serious, and Temple used to say, with the most charming candour, that he loved to be frivolous. It was his misfortune, and not his fault, that for certain hours every day he had to devote himself to the service of his country, in the Patents Office. Perpetual motion was the subject which engrossed this butterfly, and it afforded scope for much humour on the part of his friends.

"So ridiculous!" he would murmur to himself. "The only motion I would choose to perpetuate would be a waltz with a charming partner."

Something of this he said to Mrs. Popham when he got into the bright flower-scented drawing-room.

Mrs. Popham looked rather reproachful. She was a little woman, too thin, except for an age that has revived the pre-Raphaelite type, but she was carefully dressed, and passed for something less than her forty years. Mrs. Popham's dancing days were over, she averred, though to those who knew her pliant order of mind, there was hope that they might one day return. Fred Temple said as much, but he put it more neatly. It was a pleasure to him to be artistic; perhaps a greater pleasure than to be sincere.

"Never," she said, "never. Life is too precious to waste, and there are so many things one wants to know."

"There is one thing I want to know," said Temple, sitting forward in his chair,

and looking very bright. He was slim, and tall, and dark; with lively eyes, and smiling lips which a slight, black moustache did not conceal. The smile had frequently a good-humoured flavour of scorn, which removed it from mere vacuous amiability, and gave you the impression that he found himself quite equal to most people, and possibly superior to some. The superiority did not peep out aggressively, however, and he was usually voted rather an ornamental and agreeable young fellow.

"Oh, don't ask me," said Mrs. Popham with humility. "I am only a learner. But I have had a manifestation. I want to tell you about it."

"But first tell me, please, how I came to find this on your threshold."

Temple took a sprig of flower from his button-hole, and held it out to her.

"What is it?" asked his hostess, peering at it with short-sighted eyes. She felt helplessly for her eyeglass.

"It is a happy omen; it is luck, rare good luck, embodied in this bit of white heather. Don't ask me to relinquish it. Good fortune treats me so scurvily, and this comes, like all the good things of my life, from you."

She took it between her fingers, and peered at it closely, not heeding his gallant phrases.

"Why," she said at last, in an accent of certainty, "that child must have left it."

"What child?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Popham, suddenly realising all that she had relinquished, "how I wish I had not sent her away! How I wish I had asked her to come in! If it hadn't been that I wanted to see you so particularly! You would have told me whether she would do."

She again sought vaguely for her eyeglass, and, securing it at last, adjusted it, and looked at him with a naïve anxiety on her thin little face.

Fred Temple smiled. It was his belief that women were born incoherent, and he had a great deal of patience. When you have no apparent income, and are yet a lover of society, you need to have a large reserve fund of patience. Fred Temple was a mystery, whom people accepted because they had got tired of speculating about him without result. He always dressed well, and was seen everywhere, and his judgement was accepted without question on matters of taste; yet nobody knew whence he came nor to whom he belonged, nor yet from what source flowed

the income that paid his tailor's bills. It did not come from the Patents Office, that was quite certain. A man who is so bereft of traditions must necessarily exercise some tact to succeed, and Fred Temple succeeded.

He got almost everything out of life that he asked from it, and what more could birth or wealth have done for him! His own skill used to afford him a good deal of inward humour, and a pleasing sense of acuteness. He proceeded now to unravel the entanglement of Mrs. Popham's thoughts.

"In the first place," he said, "who is this benevolent fairy that scatters her gifts on your threshold?"

"Thomas said the old man was very rude—quite abusive," said Mrs. Popham, beginning to explain in her own way. "Think of that!" she clasped her hands together.

"I thought," said Fred, under his breath, "that it was a child."

"Oh, not such a child—nineteen or twenty, I should say; but in the North people keep looking young much longer."

"Then this message comes from the North?" he twisted the flower, which he had again taken into his possession, lightly round between his finger and thumb.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Mrs. Popham staring. "I am sure I told you," and thereupon she began to tell him all over again.

Temple knew her very well, and held her talk, with only an assisting question now and then. Mrs. Popham's conversation ran somewhat in this wise:

"It was in the North—at least I don't know if you would call it North—but Lilliesmuir is in Scotland, so it must be North, mustn't it? It was summer, you know; perhaps July, or it might be August. Yes, I remember now it was August, because I had to go into mourning for my cousin Northcote. The date is on his tombstone in Kensal Green."

"Shall we go there and fix it beyond doubt?" Fred asked gravely.

"I daresay Elise could tell me," said Mrs. Popham, all unconscious of his irony. "She had to get my mourning, you know. I sent her to Edinburgh for it: as it was only a cousin, it didn't so much matter."

It will be seen that Temple needed to draw largely on his stock of patience, and to exercise some acumen in sifting the wheat from the chaff of this narrative.

He leant back in his chair and looked

at his hostess with an amused smile in his dark eyes. He steered her back quite skilfully when she threatened to wander too far afield, and somehow or other, in fragments neatly patched together, he managed to construct the whole story satisfactorily to himself.

It was quite a pretty little romance as he pictured it in the warm, flower-fragrant room, this young girl's adventure out of the North with a talisman in her hand.

"I know something of Scotland," he said with a laugh. "Its people are the most self-opinionated in creation. I dare say that old fellow thought he was doing you a favour in coming at all."

"Thomas said he seemed to expect to be asked to dine—a man I never saw!"

"What presumption!" Temple laughed again, showing his white teeth. He understood Mrs. Popham so well, and knew so exactly how to estimate the strength and length of her enthusiasms, that he found something deliciously naïve in the absolute faith that had brought those two wanderers to her door in simple reliance on her promise to receive them.

He amused himself with this awhile before he said—"But you invited the daughter—granddaughter—which is it?"

"Niece."

"The niece to visit you?"

"Oh yes, I asked her to come, and I don't mind having her. I am quite willing to have her. I want to have her," cried Mrs. Popham, fanning the flame of her benevolence till it began to glow again. "But she came so suddenly—as if she had dropped from the clouds. I hadn't a moment to think—and then, you were coming."

"I am sorry that my coming should have hindered your meeting," said Temple, sincerely wishing he had come ten minutes earlier. It was a charming little episode, and he would have liked to see the heroine of it. Really Mrs. Popham had managed rather badly, and he did not feel so grateful as he ought to have done for the preference that left him master of the situation. He would have been quite willing to divide the honours with this strange guest, who came out of the mists and vanished into them again, leaving, in token of her presence, the white flower he held in his hand.

"I wanted to tell you about that manifestation"—Mrs. Popham had just been made a member of the Society for Psychological Research—"we have got a most remarkable clue."

"Yes," said Temple pleasantly. "I must come some evening soon and hear all about it. It would be wronging the spirits to crowd their concerns into the ten minutes which is all I dare allow myself just now."

"I thought you were going to dine with me."

"Unfortunately I must deny myself that pleasure too. We toilers cannot choose, unhappily."

Any one who knew Fred Temple well, or even those who knew him but alightlly, would have understood at once that this insinuated plea of work was a mere pretence to cover his disinclination. He did not himself wish it to be taken for more. "You can't be positively rude," he would say genially. "You must give your refusal some kind of a garment, even if it be but a rag, to cover its nakedness."

Perpetual motion released him at four o'clock, and even boots and washing appliances—which also belonged to his department—ceased to haunt him when the office doors closed upon him. So when he refused Mrs. Popham's invitation to dine, it was simply because he felt he could amuse himself better elsewhere. If the little Scotch girl had been present, it would have been another affair; but in her absence the ghosts were certain to reign, and it was not Temple's will at the moment to be bored by any such topic. So he put on a grave expression and said contritely:

"I am so sorry. I feel as if Miss Burton would never forgive me for keeping her from you. And now I must go away. Perhaps it isn't too late yet—"

"Too late to send for her!" Mrs. Popham grasped eagerly at this idea. "I wonder if she would come! You will stay and see her!"

Temple looked thoughtful. He was so good an actor that he threw himself thoroughly into the part he happened to be playing, and he now began seriously to consider whether the nature of his engagements would allow him this indulgence; but at this moment Mrs. Popham made the discovery that Tilly and her angry uncle had left no address, nor had they thrown out any hope of their return.

The footman, when summoned and questioned, could give no information beyond that already drawn from him in cross-examination. When he had shut the door upon the old gentleman's anger, Thomas had gone down to tea, and had

considered the matter no further except as a good story to amuse the cook, and impress her with the valour of his behaviour under attack.

"You didn't notice which way they went?" Temple asked.

"No, sir, I didn't. The young lady looked very frightened, sir; but the old gentleman hurried her off before she could speak."

Now that they were gone, vanished beyond view, Mrs. Popham began to realise what an opportunity she had lost.

Temple, for ends of his own, artfully fanned the dying embers of that old-time enthusiasm, till it glowed with more than its early heat. Every moment Tilly's remembered charms grew in number, every moment Mrs. Popham became more Scotch in sentiment and feeling, till she had almost persuaded herself that she had thrown away the happiness of her life in shutting her door on Tilly.

"It shouldn't be so very difficult to find them," said Temple, beginning now to console. "They seem to be tolerably well-marked figures. Will you describe them again?"

"You will find them?" cried Mrs. Popham, clasping her thin hands, and puckering her brows into an anxious frown.

"Yes, I will find them," he replied with a laugh. "The man is old, you say——"

"Oh, I don't know anything about him," she said, dismissing him carelessly, "except that he has adopted Tilly."

"That's something."

"They say he has come home to settle, and that he made heaps and heaps of money abroad; but I know nothing more about him."

"Why, that's everything," asserted this worldly young fellow. "If a man is rich, you don't want to know anything more about him. It's a character in itself."

"But if he is very rough—you won't like that!" she said, with unexpected shrewdness.

"Nobody can be rough when he is so well gilded!" cried Temple gaily. "Now, look here. You know their address in Scotland?"

"Tilly lived with her cousin at the Manse. I might write there. I will do it now, if you can wait."

"I can wait," said her guest. "After

all, though there are only about a dozen hotels they'd be likely to choose among, it would be the quickest way in the end to get their address from home."

He walked about the room while Mrs. Popham sat down to her writing-table, and dashed off a little note sufficiently full of underlined words and exclamation points and incoherent beseechings to startle the Rev. Mr. Sinclair out of his native phlegm.

Mrs. Popham emphasised the necessity of hearing by return of post, and got up from her chair feeling that her arms were already about Tilly's neck.

"You will post it yourself?" she asked, as Temple bade her good-night.

"I will post it myself."

"And even if Mr. Sinclair should not know where they have gone, you will find them?"

"I will find them," he said with confident gaiety, "and all the reward I will claim will be this sprig of heather."

He had begun his investigation out of a sense of amusement; but now his curiosity was piqued, and he felt himself almost as enthusiastic over the quest as Mrs. Popham herself.

As he went briskly to his club, he entertained some very pleasing visions, and saw himself as in a show, walking through scenes in which he modestly played the part of hero. A doting, foolish old Cressus, and a pretty young girl, unversed in the ways of the wily old world, and he the link that restored them to friendship; their adviser, consoler, confidant—a pleasing vision, truly!

He paused when he reached the highway to look back upon the peaceful darkness of the street he had left behind. Lights glimmered from the stately houses; a blaze from Mrs. Popham's uncurtained windows seemed to beckon the wanderers to return, but no soft footfall sounded on the pavement; no questioning blue eyes looked into his. Big London had swallowed Tilly up, and there was nothing of her left but the token that had fallen at his feet.

He felt with a hand under his great-coat. Yes, the flower was there, lying snug near his heart. He smiled to himself as his fingers touched it.

Good fortune was coming to him at last!

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 963. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dams Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADRIAN LYLE walked slowly and thoughtfully homewards in the light of the June sunset. The memory of Alexis Kenyon lingered with him despite himself. She puzzled, she disturbed, and almost—so he thought—disgusted him. Yet the cruel cynicism, the critical coldness, the audacity and skill of her mind, asserted themselves with a strength he could not deny.

A growing sense of annoyance was present with him as he thought of that conversation, and felt how weak his arguments had been, how wanting in zeal and fervour, and true purpose. That cold face; the little, cruel, insolent smile on those perfect lips; had shattered his weapons for once, had almost made him doubt that the faith he upheld was after all worth living and dying for; that the human soul was as mystical and divine as he had always upheld it to be; that the creed, of which he was a messenger and teacher, was the real and soul-felt truth of a glorious Christianity!

The little sting she had implanted rankled in his breast. He had gone to her full of purpose, and with a cause to plead. How tame, and spiritless, and foolish it all looked now!

It was the man, not the priest, who confronted him, who walked side by side with him through the golden shades of the avenue—the man in his weakness, his imperfections, his vain yearnings, his struggles after that perfection which it is not in mortal to attain. Past years of

frenzied doubt and eager research rushed back to his memory; days when the divinity of heaven had been unrealisable—an abstraction, to which his mental powers could give no shape, and in which his soul could take no comfort. He had thought that such doubts were past, such dark hours ended; and yet a look, a word, had recalled them to life. He felt that there was neither grace, nor loveliness, nor consolation in such a mind as Alexis Kenyon's, and yet it held a power that combated his own, and turned his noblest aspirations into myths and dreams.

"How much harm a woman like that can do!" he thought to himself; "making life a mockery of every pure and noble thing, its best efforts futile, its ideals purposeless, its ambitions insignificant. She would turn even prayer to ridicule—and call the soul's agony a useless waste of feeling and energy, as futile as the cry of a child in the dark to some unknown Power that cares nothing for its sufferings!"

And yet, with all these memories of her, he could not but acknowledge how dangerously fascinating she was; how fatally possible it might be for her to hold, and control, and subjugate a man's life, crushing with careless feet whatever lay in her path; putting aside with that small, white, cruel hand, another claim, another influence that rashly combated her own. And, as he thought of this, he remembered Gretchen.

Was it possible that Neale Kenyon—weak, wavering, unstable as he knew him to be—could safely brave the tempting and the influence of such a woman? True, he did not seem to care for her. There was more of dread than attraction in their present relationship—at least on the young fellow's own part; but if she chose—!

His thoughts ceased at that point;

ceased with a sharp and sudden dread of pursuing the subject which haunted him so often and so persistently. He became suddenly conscious that he was not alone; that he was looking at someone or something that brought back a sharp and subtle memory.

Abruptly he paused, lifting eyes and face to the level of another.

Léon Bari stood before him, under the shadows of the drooping boughs.

Adrian Lyle's first impulse was to move aside and pass; but something in the man's face compelled him, against his will, to stand still, as he was standing.

"Do you wish to speak to me?" he asked abruptly, as Bari removed his hat with ostentatious politeness.

"If Monsieur will pardon the liberty," answered the man suavely.

"I am at your service," said the young clergyman coldly.

Bari looked furtively at the pale, grave face.

"I believe, Monsieur," he said, "that I am not mistaken in supposing you would do a service for a lady, especially one who is sick and suffering. I have a message for you from one, and one in whom I think you are somewhat interested."

"Perhaps," said Adrian Lyle, impatiently, "you would come to the point, it would save time."

The man bowed.

"Certainly, Monsieur," he said. "The message is from Mrs. Kenyon."

Adrian Lyle started; his face flushed stormily.

"Mrs. Kenyon——" he faltered, "what does she want with me?"

"Your ministration, perhaps," said Bari, with a scarcely-perceptible sneer. "I am not commissioned to say more."

"But," said Adrian Lyle suspiciously, "why does she send me a message through you? Where is her husband?"

"Mr. Kenyon," said Bari, "is in London. He is very busy. There is great excitement there. It is not unlikely he may have to rejoin his regiment in India almost immediately."

"And she—Mrs. Kenyon—is she in London also?"

"No. She is at Leawoods, in Hants. Mr. Kenyon took a small house there for her."

"And you say she is ill—and wants to see me?" pursued Adrian Lyle in a troubled voice, as that old promise recurred to his mind.

"That is what I am commissioned to tell Monsieur. Mr. Kenyon also bade me use all haste."

"Of course I will come," said Adrian Lyle, "if she needs me. But if she is ill she requires a doctor."

"Doubtless Mr. Kenyon has seen to that," said Bari. "He despatched me here with that message to you. Probably," he added—as if it were an afterthought—"Madame has some idea of changing her religion. When ladies are ill they are often fanciful, and she has spoken of it often."

"Give me the address," said Adrian Lyle coldly.

He felt the old distrust, the old dislike, to this man increasing every moment. It seemed so odd, so mysterious, that he should be summoned in this fashion to Gretchen, unless—and his heart seemed to stand still with sudden terror at the thought—unless, indeed, she was in danger.

The fear seemed to chill his blood to ice. That beautiful, girlish, passionate creature in the hands of life's common foe! And yet it might be. Lives as young, as innocent, as fair as hers had been culled by the grim Reaper with his cruel sickle again and again, even in his experience. There was no rule by which to limit the power or the decrees of Death.

He took the paper from Bari's hand, and hurried on down the length of the beech avenue, deaf and blind to everything around. Gretchen ill! Gretchen in danger! Gretchen needing him! That was all he could think of.

The mastering power of sudden emotion swept all other memories away. He forgot Alexis Kenyon; he forgot his duties in the parish; almost, he forgot Neale. When calmness in some measure returned, he went up to the Rectory to ask for the necessary leave of absence. The Rector, stout, rubicund, easy-going, enjoying a nap in his study-chair, listened to his Curate's demand and explanation with ill-concealed annoyance.

It meant additional duty for himself; it meant the laboured composition of two sermons instead of one; it meant disturbance and vexation at the present moment; and the Rector was sharp and ill-tempered in his response to the request.

"Impossible!" he said, "impossible!"

Adrian Lyle gently but firmly insisted that the summons was imperative; that, in fact, he must obey it at any risk or sacrifice.

The Rector knew the value of his young assistant well enough to consider a quarrel impolitic; but his grudging and hard-won assent sent Adrian Lyle home in a state of mind the reverse of comfortable. Still, he told himself he must go, and an hour later he set out for his destination.

The journey was one across country, necessitating many changes and many vexatious delays. It was long past midnight when he arrived at the station named in his directions. It was a little, damp, out-of-the-way place, in charge of a single sleepy porter, who told him that his destination was five miles off; that no conveyance was possible; and that the one small inn of the village would probably be closed.

The information was not inspiring; but Adrian Lyle set out to walk the distance, taking his bag in his hand.

The night had fallen dark and cloudy. But he had no difficulty in making out the road, as it ran like a white, curving line between the hedgerows.

The odours of honeysuckle and wild flowers greeted him pleasantly after the hot and dusty journey. He took off his hat and bared his head to the night wind, and, for the first time since he had left Medehurst, a sense of rest and peace stole over his troubled senses, and calmed the fever in his veins.

"It will be too late to go to her now," he thought to himself. "I will wait till morning."

Yet, even as he said the words, a strange desire seized him to see where she lived, to look at the lights in her window, where, perhaps, some watcher waited for the dawn as anxiously as he himself.

He felt certain that Kenyon must be there. The place was near enough to London for him to run down by the last train and return by the first; and surely, in this hour of a young wife's first illness, her husband would be by her side.

Mile after mile he walked steadily on, passing now and then a farm-house, or a cottage. He came at last to a place where two roads met.

He paused then. A sudden flush rose to his face, a sudden terror shook his heart. One of these roads led to the village, the other would take him to the little house called "The Laurels," where he had been told Gretchen lived.

Usually so decided and self-sufficient, it struck Adrian Lyle as strange that he could not at once make up his mind to

pass on, and continue his way to the village inn. A sort of longing, a restless desire to see this house of Gretchen's, took possession of him. He tried to combat it, but it was too strong even for his strength.

Against his will, against his reason, had been the attraction that had drawn him to Gretchen's side in those dreamy, fateful hours in the old Italian cities. Against his will and against his reason now, was the longing that drew him towards her dwelling-place on this fatal night in June.

He took the road which turned aside from the village. It plunged into darkness and depths of shade, narrowing at last into a mere lane beneath the thick-leaved, overhanging trees.

He walked on, his footsteps making a faint echo in the silence—a silence which held the brooding, mysterious hush of a coming storm.

For about half a mile the lane extended, then it came to an abrupt stop, seemingly at a thick and impenetrable hedge of laurels which stood breast-high like a rampart, and afforded no glimpse of anything beyond.

In vain Adrian Lyle's eyes searched for gate or entrance. He could see nothing. While he stood there doubtful and hesitating, a long low roll of muttered thunder broke the stillness, and a vivid flash of lightning followed. The trees around trembled and shook. A cold faint wind swept across his cheek, and moaned amidst the rustling boughs which formed so thick a canopy. That momentary flash, however, had shown Adrian Lyle a small iron gate at a short distance from where he stood, set back in the deep edge of shrubs. Involuntarily he stepped towards it, and laid his hand upon the latch. It yielded to his touch. Before a second flash had rent the darkness, he was on the inside of the gate, and treading a narrow and gravelled path that wound its way among a maze of vegetation, which it was too dark to distinguish. He paused and looked up. The hurrying clouds showed a faint gleam of moonlight that was again eclipsed by darkness. The moaning wind took a louder and more threatening tone, and for an instant the thought crossed Adrian Lyle's mind that it would be wiser for him to make his way to the village, before the storm broke out in all its fury.

But as he wavered, another flash, more brilliant than any of its predecessors, showed him a small low house fronting him at but a short distance. and as he

moved forward he caught the glimmer of a light in one of the upper windows. For an instant his heart seemed to stand still; then it leaped from frozen silence into life and warmth, and sent forth its eager longings into an involuntary prayer—a prayer for the young fair life, which even now might be fighting with danger, or with death.

As in fervid words that petition took flight amidst the storm and darkness all around him, the window above was suddenly opened, and a figure stood revealed there, thrown into strong relief by the light within the chamber.

Adrian Lyle saw it and stood transfixed as if to stone. The loose white draperies, the long floating hair, the lovely face looking down at his own, and clearly recognisable even in the gloom, all came to him as a revelation of past joys and past memories.

Ill—dying—who had told him so? Who had led him here on this fool's errand?

Again the lightning leaped out from the dark horizon line, and in showing him the figure at the window with yet more dazzling clearness, revealed to her his own standing motionless below.

She leant suddenly forward; she thrust out eager face and arms from the jasmine and the roses that framed her lattice. "Neale," she cried low and soft, as if half afraid of her own hope, "Neale, is it you?"

Then a great flood of crimson rushed to Adrian Lyle's face, scorching him with hot and savage shame, and his pulses beat like hammers as he thought how he had been tricked and fooled.

"It is not Neale," he cried stormily. "It is I—Adrian Lyle! Did you not send for me?"

She sprang to her feet. All the glow and fire of her eyes turned to sudden dread.

"Mr. Lyle," she faltered. "You—at this hour. What does it mean?"

"You—you did not send for me——?" he repeated stupidly.

"No," she answered, amazed at the question. "Why should I send for you? I did not know you were even in England. Indeed!"—and she laughed a little—"I think I had forgotten all about you; though, when you spoke——"

He put out his hand as if to ward off a blow. His brain seemed dizzy, and a sudden chill calm fell over his excited feelings.

"There has been some mistake," he said, "some grave error. I—I will call in the morning and explain. I heard you were ill—dying."

"I, ill!" she exclaimed. "I was never better in my life. Who could have told you such a thing?"

"It must have been a mistake," Adrian Lyle repeated in the same dazed way. "I—I am very sorry."

"But I can't understand," the girl said impatiently. "It is very odd. Where are you going?" she cried out suddenly, as she saw him moving away.

He gave no answer. At the same moment, another crash of thunder shook the width of the dark heavens, rolling and reverberating like a cannonade over the country round. The girl gave a faint, low cry of terror, and started back a pace. The lightning once again lit up the gloomy darkness, and as she clasped her shuddering hands in momentary terror, she saw a dark mass separate itself from the writhing, tossing branches that the wind had seized with giant force, separate, and sway forwards, and then fall with a dull, loud crash upon the ground.

MRS. SILAS B. BUNTHORP.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE daily walks of Miss Coleridge and Maggie had, during the next week or so, another excitement besides the parrot. This new excitement was the constant meeting with Mr. Aylmer, who, under the pretence of taking his dogs for a walk, would stray across their path, at the unfashionably early hour Mrs. Englefield had set apart for their daily exercise. Maggie began even to look out for him. It was a new experience of hers, this handsome young man, who not only had the rare gift of making children like him, but who also exerted himself to deepen that liking, as far as this particular child was concerned. He was so strong and so gentle, and told her such funny stories, and gave her such wonderful sweets and pretty flowers. And the experience was so good, that between their meetings, she was always talking of him. Miss Coleridge might have grown jealous of her rival, if such a baseness had been possible to her; or she might have grown tired of perpetually hearing his name, only she never said so. Perhaps she began to look out for him a little too, though she,

at first, honestly discouraged the meetings. But he was not to be snubbed, and his cool perseverance, which was always courteous, won the day. She felt that to make a fuss, in face of this perfectly unconscious manner of his, would give significance to their meetings, which he never intended. Besides, she really liked him and trusted in him, believing that there was something good under the lazy, conceited, slightly sceptical exterior he presented to the world. Jack Aylmer soon found out enough to know how isolated the lives of these two were in the Englefield household, and had no fear of his acquaintance being commented upon to any member of it. That he was putting Miss Coleridge in peril; raising fatal hopes which could never be fulfilled; awaking dreams in her girl's heart which would make that heart ache for many a day after; did not trouble him—or rather, if a sense of guilt did sometimes sting him, as he looked into the smiling face, uplifted in greeting to him, he crushed it with a thought of Maysie. And yet, it seemed as if the further he advanced in the girl's good graces, the less probable it seemed that she would help him. Once or twice he brought a letter in his pocket, to ask her to deliver it secretly. But some frank look in her eyes, some little joyous note in her laugh, would suddenly make the request impossible—for that day, at least. They always gave him the ridiculous fancy that to ask it, was like trying to make some innocent child do wrong.

But he always went to meet her again. He was even chaffed by one or two of his friends, who had happened to meet him with the "pretty governess." The meetings filtered through various manly conversations, till they began to reach the ears of one or two women of Mrs. Englefield's acquaintance; and an opportunity only was wanted to tell that lady herself of her governess's goings on.

Yet all Jack Aylmer's exertions to please so insignificant a member of his acquaintance seemed wasted, at least for the purpose he had intended. One night, at a ball, about three weeks after Maysie's engagement, he managed to put a note into her own hand himself. What was more to the point, she took it.

The next day happened to be Miss Coleridge's monthly holiday. She had no friends in London, except an old maiden lady, a great invalid, and she always spent this day with her. This old lady had a settled conviction that no lady ought ever

to be out after dark, the result of which fixed opinion was that Miss Coleridge was always sent off home about seven. She had never once been later than eight o'clock in returning. But this evening she had an appointment. Lady Arundel was leaving the country for always. She was a voluntary exile, for the sake of the motherhood which she had dishonoured. She had begged Miss Coleridge to come to her, that she might hear the last news she would ever have of her lost child. The interview was a long one, and it was quite half-past ten when Miss Coleridge reached the house in Grosvenor Walk. To her astonishment she found the door ajar. It was careless, for the lovely June night had attracted all sorts of people into the streets, and there were none of the servants about the hall. In fact, they were all enjoying themselves in their various quarters, "the family" being out, with the exception of Maysie, who had pleaded a severe headache, and begged to be left at home. She really looked ill, and her mother noticed for the first time how thin she had grown during the last month. Lord Maitland was returning to-morrow. It would never do for him to find that she had fallen off since her engagement, and perhaps suspect that she had been "fretting" for some one else. So her mother consented.

About twelve o'clock, Mrs. Englefield and her second daughter were driving home from the reception they had attended after their dinner-party. They had dropped Mr. Englefield at his club, and had picked up a friend at another house. This friend was an elderly spinster, and cousin of Lord Maitland. In theory, Mrs. Englefield hated her, as did most people; in practice, she loaded her with attentions, as did most people also. For, in addition to her wealth and social position, she had a tongue for scandal and venom, which Society dreaded like a lash. She was also of an economical frame of mind, and liked to save her horses as well as her money.

Mrs. Englefield, little suspecting what she was entailing upon herself for that civility, had offered to drive her this night. She was particularly anxious to stand well with the Honourable Miss Malet, all the more so, because she had strongly opposed her cousin's engagement to Maysie Englefield. To oblige her, Mrs. Englefield had come away from the reception rather early, and Laura Englefield, who had been enjoying herself extremely, was very cross—so cross, indeed, that she even required sundry

warning touches in the carriage from her mother's foot, to remind her that she was to be civil to the Honourable Miss Malet. Unable to give vent to her feelings, she nestled down into her corner of the brougham, and consoled herself by thinking over the new acquaintance she had made, and parting from whom had caused her such grief.

He was a rich young American, who had just risen like a sun of gold upon the horizon of London Society. Laura was not the only girl that night, who went home with eyes fairly dazzled by his golden rays, which not even his decidedly curious, not to say plebeian name, could dim—Mr. Silas B. Bunthorp.

But Society scorned such a trifle as a name, when it hailed from New York, and was touched with the splendour of that colossal fortune, which Mr. Silas B. Bunthorp was spending so royally. Society scarcely even troubled to find out that personally he was of far greater value than his fortune. Perhaps Mrs. Englefield was also thinking of him, for he had shown symptoms of being taken by Laura's fresh beauty. The Honourable Miss Malet was certainly thinking of him, as she commented freely upon the scandalous way in which women rushed after every man who had a little money. But she kept, at the same time, a lynx eye upon the streets and the people passing to and fro in the gaslight. She had several times surprised some very interesting scandals by so doing. Suddenly the words died on her lips, and with a startled exclamation, which had a note of cheerful triumph in it, she clutched Mrs. Englefield's arm:

"Look!" she exclaimed.

A young man and a girl were standing on the edge of the pavement waiting for a hansom, which was drawing up. The next second the brougham had swept past.

"That young scamp, Jack Aylmer! There's no mistaking him anywhere! And your governess! I always said she was too pretty to be any good. I only heard to-day that they are always about together."

Mrs. Englefield, at that first sharp explanation, had also leant forward. She sank back into her corner again, as the brougham rolled on. The movement was not fashionable languor or indifference. It was the complete prostration of her being—mental and physical. Her face was as white as a sheet, and her lips were trembling.

Happily the Honourable Miss Malet

was too triumphantly scandalised to notice her condition, but continued to pour out indignation, advice, reproof, exhortation, till Mrs. Englefield felt like a person standing defenceless before a deadly hail-storm of bullets, only, with quivering flesh, living through it all.

They dropped the Honourable Miss Malet at last, Mrs. Englefield knowing that, before she had been in the house half-an-hour, all the guests at the entertainment going on there, would be acquainted with Jack Aylmer's last escapade.

She ordered the carriage to drive home, though she and Laura were due at another place. Laura, who had been completely aroused from her ill-temper and golden dreams, broke out again to her mother as they drove off:

"Just fancy, Miss Coleridge——"

"Hold your tongue!" Her mother turned on her so fiercely that the girl shrank back terrified. "If ever you breathe a word of this, or ask any questions, I will turn you out of doors. If Maysie has disgraced us, are you going to blazon abroad our shame?"

"Maysie! Oh, mother!" Then Laura sank back, silenced, stunned—the striking resemblance between Maysie and Miss Coleridge explaining all.

Mrs. Englefield went straight to her daughter's room on her return. Something in her voice, made Maysie afraid to delay, though she had only just time to thrust out of sight the disguise of Miss Coleridge's poor little shabby ulster and hat, which she had taken from her wardrobe. She had not expected her mother in so soon that night, and had only been in herself, about ten minutes. The hansom coming straight, and driving with all the speed that Aylmer's freely-spent money could inspire, had outtripped the carriage which had driven the Honourable Miss Malet first to her destination. The butler, coming into the hall just after she had let herself in, saw her running up the staircase, and, on his return to the housekeeper's room, remarked that Miss Coleridge, for a wonder, was late.

Caught red-handed, Maysie could but confess. Jack Aylmer, in the letter he had given her the evening before, had prayed her, by all the old love, to grant him an interview. Inspired perhaps by a reckless spirit of adventure, perhaps, indeed, by that old love itself, which was the deepest feeling her shallow heart had ever known, Maysie had gone to his

chambers. He had told her that he should wait in all that day in case a message came from her. She had thought herself safe enough. Her own people would not be home till late, or, rather, early in the morning. A few minutes with him, and then she would be home again. But she had stayed longer than she intended. The parting—for she left Jack Aylmer no doubt as to what the interview was to be—was hard for her as well as for him.

Mrs. Englefield, filled with fury against Jack Aylmer, yet felt that there was one redeeming touch in the whole mad escapade. He had been as shocked at the girl's reckless folly, as even she, the mother, was, and had done his best to shield her from observation. As far as Mrs. Englefield could know for certain, no one had seen her, but the Honourable Miss Malet, who thought it was Miss Coleridge.

Even Mrs. Englefield was forced to remember that Aylmer's provocation had been great, and that he had acted like a gentleman, in spite of that foolish letter he had written.

But for Miss Malet, the whole might have been kept quiet. But she had seen, as she supposed, Miss Coleridge, and Miss Coleridge must bear the brunt of Maymie's sin. Yet it was hard. The girl was good, and her fair reputation was her living. But it was impossible to keep her in the house after that. General surprise and disapproval would lead to questionings, which might end in the fatal truth being brought to light. Mrs. Englefield lay awake all night, wondering how it was to be done. It was not easy to bring such an accusation home to Miss Coleridge, who was known never to be out after eight. She said nothing to her husband. He was a selfish, good-natured man, who never troubled himself much about domestic affairs; but she felt that he would feel this keenly, and probably spoil all by his unreasoning wrath.

A chance word of her maid's the next morning solved the difficulty. Miss Margaret had been frightened the evening before, and she had gone to sit with her; and so had been unable to finish her mistress's tea-gown. Miss Margaret had heard a noise in the passage outside, where Miss Coleridge's wardrobe stood. But it must have been only fancy, for when she (the maid) came, there was no one there. No, Miss Coleridge did not hear, because she was not in. She did not come in till very late. Brooks, the butler, had seen her entering about twelve o'clock. or it

might have been a little later, and had even made a remark about her being so late.

CHAPTER V.

A LITTLE later, Miss Coleridge was summoned from the school-room to Mrs. Englefield's room. She went happily enough, for it was the day on which her salary was due, and she was looking forward to buying a pretty summer dress. She was even wearing a rose in the belt of her dress, one of a bouquet which Jack Aylmer had given to Maggie the day before. When she came out of the room again there was a look in her eyes which even Mrs. Englefield had not cared to meet.

At first, when the accusation was brought against her, she had broken into indignant denials. When asked to explain where she had been, she had flushed, looked consciously troubled, and declined to reply; but as she saw how her silence gave a colouring to the accusation, she said that she had been to see Lady Arandel. Mrs. Englefield seized upon the confession as a godsend. A girl who would visit such an abandoned woman was capable of anything. Her indignation and eloquence were really grand, until they came suddenly to a full and discomfited stop.

Miss Coleridge, half-stunned at first and unable to utter anything but those broken indignant denials, had begun to understand.

"Mrs. Englefield," she broke in upon the virtuous torrent with something in her face which crushed Mrs. Englefield into that ignominious silence, "I see—you know that I did not do that. Mr. Aylmer knows it; your daughters know it. But you all know that I am innocent, and yet you accuse me of a thing, which, as far as my future is concerned, is my death-blow. No one will take me as a governess now, though my daily bread depends on it. But someone has to be sacrificed, and you are sacrificing me. If you did not, all the world to-morrow would know that your daughter is not a fit wife for Lord Maitland. If it is any satisfaction for you, I will go away at once. I don't think it is to save you that I keep silence. I think it is because I despise you all so heartily, that it is not worth my while to justify myself."

The next second she had left the room, leaving the woman of the world—the haughty, virtuous matron—silenced, humbled to the dust. It was sometime before

even she could face the world, with the same self-complacent dignity as before.

And so Miss Coleridge vanished for ever from the great house in Grosvenor Walk.

CHAPTER VI.

It was three years later. The London season had come round again. Town was beginning to fill with pretty *débutantes*, whose society-life was just opening, while those of past seasons, who had anchored themselves in safe matrimonial waters, prepared to go through the usual round of dancing, dressing, and visiting. Some of these latter came up to town all fresh for it again. Among these was Laura, a rich brewer's wife since the last spring; others found a great monotony in the eternal round of gaieties, which, after all, were always the same, and looked enviously at the pretty girls, who were so happy and eager for the life that was but beginning for them. Among these rather bored ones, was Lady Maitland. She felt that life was a disappointment, and that she ought to have been a Duchess. There were others of the opposite sex also given to moralising.

"It is disgustingly monotonous, this eternal beginning of the same old thing," said Jack Aylmer, turning out of the Park, this March afternoon. The Row was already full of familiar faces. He had seen some very pretty girls, who were to be presented immediately, as a preparatory rite for the new life. But none of them had quite pleased his fastidious taste. There was something lacking in their eyes, or complexion, just as there was always something lacking in the conversation of every woman he spoke to now. The thought of going through another season, with only those insipid beauties to amuse him, was depressing. He never enjoyed himself now as he used to, yet, to-day, he had more conditions for enjoyment in his favour. To-day he was prosperous; he bore the stamp of a man who could do something, and the world treated him accordingly.

Just a week after Maysie's marriage, his friends—after a common fashion of friends—came forward and "did something for him," which, two months before, would have given him unalloyed happiness. The delay of two months was the drop of bitterness which is the alloy in all earth's good fortunes.

"Just my confounded luck!" he had commented upon the fact. Yet, it was a

curious thing, it was not Maysie's loss which had provoked the sudden anger. Perhaps her marriage had been the death-blow of his love. Perhaps it was the shameful sacrifice which had been made to bring it about, which slew it. When he found out what had been done, he became furious. His first impulse was to rush into the world, and proclaim Miss Coleridge's innocence on the house-tops. But, as Mrs. Englefield explained to him, to save one girl, the other must be sacrificed, and surely it was better that Miss Coleridge, who was a mere nobody, should be, than Maysie. He could not see it clearly, yet Mrs. Englefield, whose arguments were the embodiment of Society wisdom, found some sort of response in his own brain. Sick to the heart with the dishonour of the sacrifice, furious at the thought of the suffering of the innocent girl, he yet saw no way out of it. For it was as hard to incur the risk of disgracing Maysie, as he saw plainly enough that he should, as to let Miss Coleridge suffer. He did make one attempt to save her, by trying to deny to the Honourable Miss Malet that it was Miss Coleridge whom she had seen. "If it were not she, it was Maysie Englefield," she had said, and he was silenced. But the Honourable Miss Malet began to suspect the truth. She kept, however, the knowledge to herself, for the present at least, either to spare her cousin—the marriage having taken place—or to use, as a rod in pickle for Maysie and her mother in future, should they prove troublesome. And a day did come, when she used her weapon, and Society found out that it had been too hasty in its conclusions. But in three years the world had quite forgotten anything so insignificant as the little governess: only one or two of her own friends knew that she had gone to America, where some lady had found her a capital engagement. It was the old lady who owned the parrot, and who had happened to make the girl's acquaintance just at the time of her trouble. She had been forbidden to write to Maggie, and the same restrictions had been put on Maggie. So, as Aylmer knew absolutely nothing of her own family or friends, he could get no information of her. Perhaps, it would be fairer to say that, after the first month or two, when he had gone half mad with the desire to find her, and tell her that he had had nothing to do with Mrs. Englefield's accusation, he had made no further attempt to communicate with her. For he made a

discovery just at that time, which was a very troublesome one, for a man in his position, to make. He knew perfectly well, this March day, why all other women had become uninteresting to him. He knew why the sight of a white rose would send a throb of intolerable pain to his heart. His cheek would flush hot and red, as if he felt it strike him again, flung at him in that half laughing, half disdainful scorn. He never went to a ball without thinking of two figures hiding away upstairs in the dark, watching; one of whom had "sweetest eyes were ever seen."

But he could think of other things too. If there had been a gulf between them before, it was still wider to day. Then he had been penniless, utterly unable to marry a poor girl. Now his very good fortune made it still more impossible. A foolish marriage would ruin him. He had already made a name for himself as a rising man. He might end in the Cabinet—now that he had a chance of a beginning. But he must not fetter himself for his upward march. To make a girl in Miss Coleridge's position, without connections, wealth, or influence, his wife, would be madness. Nay, who had not even—here he always flushed painfully—a blameless reputation. So he had struggled desperately against his love, therewith—though he was unconscious, perhaps, of it—struggling against all that was best and truest in his own nature. And in proportion as he silenced the love, so did cynical disbelief, selfish worldliness, cold indifference grow.

But there were still days when life seemed intolerable without her, and to-day was one. He turned his steps in the direction of the road where lived the parrot they used to go every morning to see. He had always thought it a dull street; to-day, it looked drearier than ever under an overcast sky. The east wind swept through the grey air in dry, cutting blasts, raising whirlwinds of dust.

Perhaps it was this cheerless greyness which made the sight of a woman coming down the steps of the house where the parrot lived, seem like a beatific vision. It was Miss Coleridge! Exactly as he had last seen her! No; there was a change. A change he felt, but could not define. Perhaps it was her dress. She turned at the same moment, and saw him. At the sight of her face, which flushed hotly, and then greeted him with the gladdest smile he had ever seen on a girl's face, all his doubts, all his fear of ridicule, all his

worldly wisdom vanished. She loved him, and he loved her. Was not that enough?

"I thought I was never going to see you again," he said, wondering how he could speak so steadily with her little hand in his.

"I have been away a long time," she said, withdrawing her hand quietly as she spoke. In some subtle way he felt the change in her manner, as he felt the change in her appearance, without really understanding either. Perhaps her manner was more self-possessed, or rather colder, for she had always had the charm of self-possession, while it may have been the dress of costly furs and velvet which so heightened her beauty, and gave it the last touch she needed. She used to be rather dowdy and old-fashioned.

"I have been in New York," she said, making no demur to-day at his walking with her.

"What have you been doing in New York?" he asked, wondering if it were there that she had learned to dress so well.

"Teaching and learning," she said with an odd little smile, which somehow seemed to place him at a disadvantage, as if she were laughing at him.

"Learning what?"

"Oh, a great many things—how to be happy, for one."

"You look happy," he said, looking down at her with a sudden start of jealousy, forgetting how ill it became him, whose life had been of late so fair and easy, to grudge this poor hardworking governess the happiness which he had never attempted to get for her.

"I am happy," she said gravely. "Everybody was so good to me over there."

"Ah, yes!" with infinite bitterness, remembering how they had treated her here. "Not like——"

"Hush!" she exclaimed, "Don't let us talk of that. I think I have quite got over it. Everybody I care for, knows I am innocent—and why should I trouble?" Her face flushed, and there was a very happy light in her eyes as they looked away from him, far down the straight, grey road, which said so plainly that there was no more fear left in her life. The flushing face and averted eyes told him their own tale. Of course he knew that she was innocent. That was enough for her. "And Maggie still cares for me," she said, as he did not speak, withdrawing her eyes from that far-off vision. "I only arrived in

town yesterday, and I met her in the afternoon. She had not forgotten me. I was so glad to see one or two of my old friends again, before we go on to Paris, to-morrow."

So she was going away at once again, in the service of the people with whom she was living. Oh! she should not live another day of such hateful drudgery when he had a home to give her.

"Miss Coleridge," he said hoarsely, stopping unconsciously and facing her, "I behaved like a scoundrel once. I feel that nothing can atone for the suffering we caused you; but if my whole life can be some sort of expiation——"

"Mr. Aylmer!" she gasped in bewilderment.

"You must not think of me. I know your generous, unselfish heart. You think that my wife ought to be—but what do I care for wealth or position? I love you—and only want you. I have loved you all along. I have thought of you every day. Life will be desolate without you. You used to like me a little. I know you like me to-day. I read it in your eyes, and—darling—say you will be my wife, and I will give your life everything it lacks to make it happy and full of ease. If it costs me——"

"Oh, but I can't!" she exclaimed, breaking in upon his eager pleading, her face pale with shocked pity, as his was with passion; and yet with a touch of laughter in her eyes, such as angels might laugh, so free from malice it was. "I do like you, but I never cared for you in that way, and—really—my life is as happy as it can be; and—and—I am Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp."

A gust of that chill, biting wind swept up the dreary street, whirling up a cloud of grey dust between them. When it cleared away, Jack Aylmer had realised that he had chosen too late, and that he was to face the new London season once more—alone.

LIFEBOAT WORK.

THERE are many pleasanter promenades than that under Limehouse Wall, with a black tidal water on one hand, and on the other a row of dismal sheds and hoardings. An aged, solitary man drags a black, decrepit barge through the sluggish waters, as if he were doing penance for the misdeeds of a former existence; otherwise there is nothing to be seen along the cindery, watery waste, nor anything to

be heard except the roar and rattle of railway trains all round. All the more strange and unexpected is the appearance at a distance of a flotilla of boats of a quite festive appearance, all white and light blue, that cast a brightness over the sombre water-way, on which they ride with a corky buoyancy, quite unusual in the craft that usually come this way. With stems and sterns high out of the water, they suggest triumphal galleys, or the long ships of our Saxon forefathers; but nearer inspection shows what they actually are—so many lifeboats, recently launched from the yard of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. In the yard itself lie other lifeboats, high and dry, and in various stages of equipment. Here, one that has just put on its first coat of paint; and there, a veteran which has come back to its birthplace, after who can say what experience of storm and shipwreck, of wild seas and roaring winds, with hope shining from the depths of despair, and joyful rescue from the darkness of impending death!

Who can say, indeed? And yet, if we had our lifeboat reports by heart, we might by the very name of the boat tell whence she came and what service she had seen. For the names are not given haphazard, but generally represent the names of those who give or bequeath the funds to build the boat. And what better monument could anyone require—that, being dead, his name or hers might still be preserved in the gratitude of souls rescued from the grave?

But now we are more concerned with the boats of the future, which are lying here already equipped—sails, masts, oars, tackling of all kinds made fast and yet readily accessible. Over them hangs a derrick with its tackle, and presently we may see them rolled over and over, tumbled this way and that, and always coming up bright and smiling, as if nothing in the way of water could hurt them or keep them under.

These particular boats, too, are of a somewhat modified type, bearing certain improvements which experience has shown to be necessary. The ordinary lifeboat of the Society is familiar in appearance to everybody, and has done splendid service in its day. No perfect safety is possible in the face of the enormous forces of Nature displayed in storm and tempest. A boat that nothing could capsize would be a boat that nobody could row, or sail, or steer. But by so arranging the weights

and buoyancy of a boat that she will always right herself and clear herself of water, the utmost available security is provided. Each man of the lifeboat crew must put on his cork jacket and belt before he takes his place, and if he is turned out of the boat by a capsize, may hope to regain his place as the boat recovers herself. It is better still not to be capsized at all; and if stability were sacrificed to the self-righting principle, most practical men would say, let the latter go.

The record of the lifeboat of the past has been on the whole excellent. During some thirty-two years the boats of the Institution have been five thousand times on service, in all kinds of bad weather, and on every description of coast; and in all this service only thirty-nine capsizes occurred, of which sixteen only had been accompanied with loss of life. In all, fifty lifeboat men were drowned from this cause during that long term of service. Altogether, including all causes of disaster, seventy-eight men sacrificed their lives in the work of rescue. The result of the work itself was the saving of twelve thousand souls from drowning.

But a most sad disaster has inspired a certain amount of mistrust in the existing type of lifeboat. The disaster made a great impression at the time; but things are so soon forgotten, that the story of it may well be briefly retold, for it is a story that should live in people's memories.

On the ninth of December last, a heavy gale was blowing on the western coasts of our islands. It had come upon us with less than usual of premonitory symptoms, and before its close not fewer than a hundred vessels had met with wreck or disaster. A large barque, the "Mexico," of Hamburg, had just sailed from Liverpool outward bound, and was driven by the gale into the dangerous labyrinth of sands and shoals which encumber the mouth of the broad estuary of the river Ribble. As a last resort her anchors were let go off the town of Southport; but they did not hold her long, and as night closed in she was seen drifting with the tide along the shore, among the wild surf that no ordinary boat would live in.

The progress of the embayed ship had been eagerly watched from the shore, and when her rockets and signals of distress announced that she had finally stranded, the Southport lifeboat crew assembled, and the boat was drawn by horses along

the shore to a point opposite the shoal on which the barque was lying. The lifeboat was successfully launched, and made her way towards the wreck.

In the meantime the vessel's signals of distress had been seen from the opposite shore of the estuary; from Lytham, where there is a small harbour and a lifeboat station; and from Stanmer Point, generally known as St. Ann's, where there are a couple of lighthouses and another lifeboat station. No time was lost at either of these stations, the boats were manned and launched; and thus, in the darkness of that December night, help was coming to the shipwrecked crew from three distinct quarters. Although the distance from Lytham to the wreck was much greater than from the Southport beach, yet the boat from the former station was far better placed for reaching the wreck. She had the wind abeam both going and returning, and she reached the stranded vessel, rescued the crew, and got safely back to Lytham without seeing anything of the other boats. It was a splendid service gallantly performed.

The Southport boat had a far different fate. She had reached to windward of the wreck and her anchor had just been thrown out, when a great green sea swept over her and capsized her. The boat did not right herself, but drifted on towards the shore. Some of her crew were entangled underneath the boat, others clung to her sides; the sea was awful, the cold intense; one by one dropped away, and when the boat at last grounded in shallow water, only two of the poor fellows had sufficient life left in them to struggle ashore. The boat from St. Ann's fared even worse. Nothing was heard of her till the following morning, when she was found bottom upwards on the beach. All her crew had perished. Thus twenty-seven lives had been sacrificed on this one wild night, and the whole district was plunged in grief.

It is to be noticed that along the coast where the disaster happened, the along-shore population are especially brave and eager to assist in the work of rescue. There is no difficulty in manning the lifeboat, double the number of volunteers required generally offer themselves. But it is to be feared that the lot of fishermen and boatmen during the long months of winter is often a hard one. The crew of the St. Ann's boat was physically not a strong one. The coxswain was suffering

from consumption, one of the other heroes had hardly broken his fast all the day, before setting out for this grim and deadly struggle with the elements. It is a story altogether that deserves to be written in letters of gold and recorded on some public monument, for nothing more simply heroic than the conduct of these poor half-nourished fishermen was ever told in ancient or modern story. Then the disaster has its bright side, and also in the general sympathy and sorrow that was felt all over the world—a sympathy that made itself felt in the best possible way by providing for those left desolate by the loss. If any of those brave fellows in his last moments felt that the bitterest pang of death was the trouble of those he left behind, he might have been consoled by the assurance that he had left them a good inheritance in the sympathy of his fellow creatures.

Quick and ample was the response to the appeal for help for those who had been dependent on the men who had lost their lives in this noble service. All through the country and into foreign lands spread the story of the lifeboat crews, and from every side funds came pouring in. An eloquent appeal from the "Daily Telegraph" brought in over six thousand pounds, and the funds speedily amounted to nearly thirty thousand pounds.

But the experience of that terrible night, with the fact of two boats capsized and failing to right themselves—for that seems to be the only probable explanation of the disaster to the St. Ann's boat—raised the grave question as to whether existing lifeboats are fully adapted to all the services required of them. No other model indeed has been found to fulfil the tests and conditions imposed by the nature of the service. But the attention of the Institution had been drawn, before the disaster, to the desirability of increasing the stability of the established model. The Lytham lifeboat, which successfully performed the service in which the two other boats succumbed, is described by the Commissioners who inquired into the disaster, as "far the better boat of the three;" a new boat, fitted with water-ballast tanks amidships, which can be filled in one minute, as soon as the boat is in a sufficient depth of water, and which can be pumped out in the same space of time. And we are assured that the increased stability thus secured also in-

creases the boat's self-righting power. An improved position for the air-tight caissons is also a feature of the new boat. Nor is the Institution content with replacing the old model by the new, as the boats are required to be renewed; they are fitting water-ballast tanks to all their boats, as far as means will permit.

A new departure, too, in lifeboats, is the use of a sliding keel, or centre board as it used to be called; and some specimens of this kind of boat were among the most interesting to be found under Limehouse Wall. The sliding keel has been adopted to meet the requirements of practical seamen, who want a more weatherly boat in sailing to windward; for the less the oars are resorted to, the less the strain upon the crew and the less the danger they incur.

And this suggests another direction in which invention may be busy. A motive power to be applied to lifeboats is a great desideratum, although, probably, the solution of the difficulty lies a good way in the future. As it is, with a harbour to start from and steam power to take her to the scene of danger, the range of a lifeboat's services may be widely increased. The services of the Ramsgate lifeboat, for instance, are far greater than those of other stations in the neighbourhood, partly owing to these advantages. Gorleston lifeboat performs many more services than Yarmouth, aided by the advantage of the harbour mouth; and the like may be said of every boat that hails from a sea-port, although as steam-tugs are generally private property, and not run on philanthropic principles, their aid is often unavailable. The Trinity Board, one would think, might help in this matter if they chose—they have plenty of steam power for one purpose or another. And that brings us to another consideration which invites attention.

It is generally admitted that telegraphic communication is very desirable between the different lifeboat stations taken in groups, as serving the same part of the coast. In the case of the wreck of the "Mexico," already alluded to, had the three stations which sent assistance been in telegraphic communication, the one from its position best adapted to perform the service, which was clearly Lytham, would have communicated with the two other stations, and the unfortunate loss of life would in all probability have been averted. Some arrangement would be necessary

among the members of a group—in the way of choosing a chief coxswain of the district, preferably by the crews concerned, one in whose seamanship and knowledge of the coast all had confidence, whose decision as to the boat and crew best fitted for the service must be implicitly obeyed.

Some progress has already been made in the matter of communication. The various lightships, whose instrumentality is of the greatest value in giving information of wrecks or ships in distress within their limits, are now being connected by telegraph with light stations on shore. But this is a matter undertaken by the Trinity Board, a wealthy and well-endowed Corporation, with powers of levying dues on the shipping within its jurisdiction. It would be impossible for the Lifeboat Institution to carry out telegraphic communication between its stations. That is a matter that only the Government could undertake, and considerable pressure would be necessary before the Chancellor of the Exchequer could be brought to incur the expense.

In the meantime it would not be difficult to establish communication between stations not far distant by means of flash signals—on the Morse principle of dots and dashes, as represented by long and short flashes—such as are now adopted in the army and navy; but these would be unavailable in thick weather, and would at other times require signallers who had been well trained in the art, while the simple A B C telegraph could be managed by the merest novice who could read and write.

But after all there is no country in the world which can boast of such a service as ours for saving life from shipwreck, manned by volunteers, and supported by voluntary contributions. Nor has any other age or time ever shown such an example of willing devotion in the case of poor fishermen and boatmen whose dangers in the way of their daily calling are apparently grave, and who earn but a scanty subsistence with much toil and suffering. And the country owes it to them that nothing shall be spared to furnish the best appliances and materials for saving life. It owes it also to the seamen who risk their lives daily around our dangerous coast, that the best kind of help should be always at hand. The Lifeboat Institution has taken up this national duty, which else would have been left unperformed, and for the past fifty years it has nobly carried out its purpose. But

the yearly sacrifice of life along our coasts is still frightful. In 1866 the Institution's lifeboats saved over six hundred lives; but as many, if not more, were lost. Every gale of any severity strews our shores with wrecks and the sands with the bodies of the drowned. All this is set forth in the annual report of lifeboat work.

Simple is the record, and yet full of unpretentious heroism, if you can read between the lines, and realise what it means to put out to sea in an open boat in the teeth of a howling gale on a dark winter's day or night, to toil for hours at the oar, with the full chance of a watery grave to end your trouble. It is a service money could not buy, and yet it is freely rendered by the boatmen and fishermen of our coasts.

Here is a specimen taken at random from the report: "Padstow.—Shortly after midnight, on the sixteenth October, the lifeboat was launched, a messenger on horseback having arrived from Trevoze Head, and reported that a vessel was showing signals of distress to the eastward of Gullan. A terrific gale was blowing from the N.N.W., with a high breaking sea. The vessel proved to be the barque "Alliance," of Risoer, Norway, timberladen from Halifax, N.S., for Glasgow. In making for the harbour she had been driven to leeward by the heavy seas, having lost some of her sails, and stranded on the Doom-bar Sands. Seven of her crew were rescued by the lifeboat, four others unfortunately having been drowned before the boat reached the ship." Well done, Cornwall! and this, be it remembered, on a coast which, according to the old saying, was "a watery grave by day or night." Equally gallant service might be chronicled all round the coast, from Caithness to the Lizard.

Terrible, too, in the view of what shipwreck implies, is the wreck chart of the United Kingdom as shown in the report of the Board of Trade. This is dotted all over with black spots, each of which signifies a casualty; at places the wrecks cluster like flies, and rank in serried lines. Not that these are to be taken altogether as signs of any especial dangers of navigation. The more pitchers to the well the more broken crockery, and where are the great tideways of commerce, there will be the wrecks most thickly gathered. But the whole east coast shows a dismal record of black spots; still, it is also bright with the red marks of lifeboat stations. The most

terrible place for wrecks seems to be the Bristol Channel, within whose yawning jaws whole fleets of vessels are brought to destruction. The Mersey is singularly free from wrecks, although the adjoining estuary of the Dee and the coasts round about owe some of their black marks to Liverpool, no doubt. The mouth of the Clyde has a terrible array of wrecks. All the western isles and the serrated coasts of West Scotland are dotted with wrecks, and here there are no lifeboat stations, according to the map, from the Mull of Cantyre right away to Duncansby Head. But there are two lifeboats on the Orkney Isles, where, as well as the Shetlands, the coast is dotted all over with wrecks.

The west coast of Ireland, too, is alarmingly bare of lifeboats. True, there is no great coasting trade to swell the list of wrecks, and ships in general give the coast a wide berth. Yet Galway has its wrecks; and so also has the Shannon shore; but not a lifeboat is there between Tralee and Aranmore.

In truth, there is no use in placing lifeboats where there is no seafaring population on the coast to man them. It is the true and manly sympathy of those who dwell along our coasts with all who are in danger from storm and shipwreck, that is the real strength of our lifeboat system. And the knowledge that help is sure to be forthcoming, if human help be possible, nerves the shipwrecked seaman to battle with the elements to the last.

The National Lifeboat Institution, with its long and intimate connection with the seafaring population, and its varied experience of the real necessities of the service, is also, everybody will be glad to see, fully alive to the duty of making all its appliances as perfect as may be. And this is mainly a question of funds, which surely will never be wanting as long as we retain our appreciation of true courage and devotion such as are exhibited on any stormy night by our gallant lifeboat crews.

THE HERONS' POOL.

In the April morn of shine and shade,
In the hidden dell the children played,
Where the snowdrop nodded its fairy bed,
The primrose peeped from its mossy bed,
And the lily leaves lay broad and cool,
On the quiet breast of the Herons' Pool.

'Neath the chestnut boughs in the glow of noon,
When the roses laughed all hail to June,
The youth and the maiden sought the spot,
Where thickest grew the forget-me-not,
Where love and life held royal rule,
As the troth was plight by the Herons' Pool.

When October's fiery finger lay
On oak and ash in the woodland way,
One came alone with the faltering tread
That seeks the place where the loved lie dead,
To strive a passionate heart to school
By the memories shrined at the Herons' Pool.

Where the snow lay thick in drift and wreath,
A strong man strode down the lonely path;
He saw how the ice lay chill and bare
Where the lilies had blossomed white and fair.
"Her sorrows are gone like the flowers, poor fool!"
He sighed, as he turned from the Herons' Pool.

A MUSICAL MEDLEY.

WHAT is the origin of harmony as distinguished from melody? I cannot tell you, any more than I can tell you where the pointed arch came from, whether it was brought from the East, or whether it arose from the intersecting of romanesque arcades. Both harmony and the pointed arch began at much the same time; that is, if they are right who think that the Greeks, in spite of all their elaborate musical system, and their Dorian, and Phrygian, and half-a-dozen other measures, knew nothing of harmony; that their choruses were sung in unison; and that it was the same with the Jewish Temple chants, in which two sets of singers answered one another antiphonally. Our oldest extant tune, the Northumbrian round, "sumer is icumen in," is harmonised for four voices; but then it only dates from early in the thirteenth century, and we want to go a great deal farther back than that. How about our possible ancestors in what Gibbon calls "the northern hive," the Uzbeck Tartars? Those Bokhara singing boys, of whom the Emir is so fond, have they got any inkling of the rudiments of harmony? Then there are the Chinese, who invented everything; but, though Amiot, and Barrow, and others have written on Chinese music, no one seems to know anything very definite about it. One says they do not care for combinations, only for simple sounds, splitting up their music, as they do their language, into monosyllables. "Their melodies," grumbles the French Jesuit Amiot (1776), "have the character of an aimless wandering among sounds." On the other hand, Gladisol, a German savant, lately dead, thinks the Chinese music as deeply philosophical as that of Pythagoras; but he does not tell us whether or not the Celestials are harmonists. Their oldest scale, by the way, consists of five tones, from F to D, omitting the B. F they call "emperor," G "prime minister, A "loyal subject," and so on, showing the close con-

nection which they have evolved between music and the Constitution; and yet the invention is not attributed to an Emperor, but to the mythical bird "Fung Hoang" and his mate; he invented the whole, she the half-tones.

Their musical instruments are quaint. There is the giant drum, half as high again as a man; and there are musical stones—sixteen T squares of different sizes hung in two rows; and there is the cheng, a hollow pumpkin with a spout, which looks just like a kitchen kettle but is filled with one or two dozen bamboo reeds. The player blows through the spout and manages with his hands the tops of the reeds.

Hindoo music is better known than Chinese; Sir W. Jones, a century ago, told how the "Gopis" (nymphs) of Madura invented each a musical scale, each hoping thereby to win for herself the love of the young god Krishna. One of these scales (the Carnati) corresponds exactly, we are told, with the old Highland Scotch scale (B and F being omitted); but when there are (even after modern reductions) thirty-six of them, no wonder that some are identical with scales in other parts of the world. Still there is nothing about Hindoo harmony in Sir W. Jones.

How about Egypt, the land of music, where, figured on the walls of tombs and temples we have huge twenty-six-stringed harps, and where the water-parties, at certain sacred feasts, going from one city to another, with much jollity, and roaring, rattling choruses, delighted Herodotus? Were their choruses harmonised, and the endless litanies which were sung in their temples? If somebody, now, could unroll a papyrus music-book, and interpret it! But nobody has done so, and all we know is that Herodotus was astonished to find the old dirge: "Woe's me for Linus," which came to Greece from Phœnicia, used as a lament for Osiris in the land of the Pharaohs. In Lane's book on Modern Egypt are several tunes which may or may not have come down from early times. Anyhow, they have got mixed with Arabian music; it is higher up the Nile, and in Abyssinia (the old Æthiopia), that, if anywhere, we are likely to find the old Egyptian melodies. Harmonists, however, it is plausibly argued, these old Egyptians must have been. Music with them was clearly a science. There is a gradual improvement in their instruments, judged by the pictures; and then, as in other things, comes a quick decline. At no

time can one imagine an orchestra of harps, guitars, lyres, flutes, and drums, played all at once, merely to strengthen the melody; the compass would have been too large. There can scarcely be a doubt that the accompaniment was not in unison, but was harmonised. And, if so, we may be pretty sure that the Jews learnt harmony in Egypt, and did not forget it when they got into Canaan. They would take the secular tetrachord, or scale of four notes, and also that of seven notes, which in Egypt specially belonged to the priests; but whether the Jerusalem temple-songs were harmonised, as Naumann assures us, or whether Sir F. Gore-Ouseley is right in saying that the old Jewish scales were incapable of being harmonised, who can tell? Some say the Psalms of David were chanted to Gregorians; anyhow, there are still certain tunes, among them the "Sch'ma Israel" ("Hear, O Israel"), and the song of Miriam, which must be very old, for they are the same in every synagogue from Poland to Lisbon. They closely resemble some of the antiphons in the Catholic service, and very probably formed the basis of the Ambrosian Chant.

What of Arab music? A good deal of it is doubtless pre-Mahometan; and, though the Muezzin sings his call, and the Dervishes dance to the music—not, as we should fancy, of wild tambourines and cymbals and drums, but of sweet, low flutes—the Arab music is far less connected with worship than the Hebrew. We know a good deal about it, not only from Lane's book, but from Félicien David, a Frenchman who, banished from Paris because he joined the St. Simonians, made his way to Constantinople, and thence to Egypt, travelling slowly back to France by way of North Africa, picking up at each stage the tunes, which he afterwards embodied in his cantata, "Le Désert," and other works. Meyerbeer, by the way, if he did not go to the Arabs for the watchman's song in the third act of "The Huguenots," proves what in modern jargon would be called "the homogeneity of the Semitic genius," for that song is just like the Koran recitative given by Lane.

There is no doubt that we owe our fiddles to the Arabs; the Rebab (called Rebec by the Troubadours) was brought in by the Crusaders; and the Arab lute is just a guitar, though the latter has kept the name, while wholly losing the shape of the old Greek cithara (harp).

I do not think that our music owes much to

old Greece. The Greeks, who were obliged to confess that their letters came from the East, claimed their music as home-grown. It was, like that of the Hindoo, mixed up with their mythology. One knows all about Hermes and the lyre, and Pan and his pipes. The myth preserved by Censorinus is the prettiest of all: Phœbus, hearing the musical twang of his sister's bow-string, set himself to think how that weapon might yield tones that should bring joy, and not death, to men. It is curious that the very earliest Egyptian harps are bow-shaped. Like the Jews, the Greeks began with the Egyptian tetrachord, to which Terpander is credited with having added three strings, and Pythagoras one more. Yet, though the Greeks developed the most elaborate musical systems, which are still the despair of commentators, and had their diatonic, enharmonic, and chromatic scales, to each of which they assigned a special moral value, the best authorities believe that they knew nothing of harmony. Music with them was always subordinated to poetry; with us, in our opera, the music is all important, the libretto is of little account; with them, in their plays, it was just the reverse. And yet they were strong believers in the power of melody. Orpheus tamed brutes, and led trees and rocks a dance; and Pythagoras sobered with solemn music a wild young fellow, who, in a fit of jealousy, was going to set his sweetheart's house on fire. The Germans think they have decyphered the music to one of Pindar's Pythian odes; but how much is "evolved out of the savant's inner consciousness," is always the sceptic's question in such cases. Mendelssohn claims, in the choruses of the "Antigone," to have reproduced the Greek rhythm; but who can tell? We do not rightly know how accent was managed, and how it differed from quantity. In their instruments the Greeks were far behind the Egyptians; they never attained to a finger-board, and therefore their lyres could only give as many notes as they had strings; and so, when Phrynis, famed for his flourishes and roulades, wanted to play in two keys without retuning, he had to add a ninth string. Poor fellow! when he went down to Sparta, the Ephors ruthlessly cut two of his strings. Sparta had grown great to the music of the old seven-stringed lyre; the whole Constitution would be upset if an upstart foreigner came fiddling on nine, instead of the orthodox number. In other parts, florid music was more

popular; a flute-player, Lamia, had a temple built to her some three hundred years B.C. She had been trained at Alexandria, and always went with the first Ptolemy on his campaign. Demetrius, surnamed "city-stormer," son of Antigonus, another of Alexander's Generals, beat Ptolemy, and took Lamia prisoner; but her music so enraptured him, that he literally made a goddess of her in her lifetime.

To Rome, the modern musical world owes a vast deal more than it does to Greece; but whether we got harmony from Rome is another question. Boethius copied Ptolemy's scales into his book on music; but he seems to have known nothing of counterpoint, that is, of harmony, of which some think the beginnings are to be found in the songs of "the hardy Norsemen."

Possibly; yet, if so, how can we account for the power which Church music exercised over the "Northern barbarians?" "How do you get such big congregations?" was a question put to a Catholic priest in New York. "It is the blessing of God on good music," he replied; and so it was with the Roman missionaries, their chanting was as great a help to them as the hymns are to the Salvation Army. Charlemagne was so delighted with Gregorians that he learnt them at Rome, and not only had them taught in all his schools, but he himself used to lead the choir at Aix, brandishing his staff at any one who sang a false note. In Ireland alone, the music was the least popular part of the new faith; it had the bards against it, and their complaints are embodied in those curious dialogues of Oisín (Ossian) and St. Patrick, in which the former contrasts "the hoarse booming of the clerics' hymns" with the joyous songs of the *Feine*.

The Church in the Roman Empire no doubt took many hints in regard to music from the heathen ritual. The historian Socrates tells how Ignatius, the martyr, saw in a vision the heavens opened, and heard the angelic choirs singing in alternate chants, which style he at once introduced into the churches of Antioch. At Rome itself the simplicity of the old Italian worship had given place to a mixture of all sorts of rituals—Syrian, Egyptian, Jewish, Phrygian; and endless litanies (*pervigilia*) at festival times were sung all night long in the temples. The Romans had organs, both pneumatic and hydraulic. Nero was specially fond of the latter, which, however, ceased to be used about the middle

of the fourth century, A.D. A fourth-century fresco represents a stage full of women singers with an organ at each wing, the bellows of which are worked by boys treading on them. Persistent tradition attributes to St. Celia, martyred A.D. 177, the appropriation of the organ to religious uses; but it was two hundred years before a General Council—that of Laodicea—put a stop to congregational singing, and confined the singing in church to trained choirs. This was just about the time when, in the West, St. Ambrose had made or adopted the chant which goes by his name, and to which St. Augustine, who heard it at Milan, attributes his conversion. The Ambrosian Chant soon came to be used all over the West, and lasted on for two centuries, till the days of Gregory the Great.

The Church now began, too, to have a musical notation. The Greeks had used letters for notes—as they did for numerals—but St. Ephraim, a fourth-century Syrian monk, invented fourteen signs, some of them like our crotchets, which were called “neumes,”—a corruption of the Greek “pneuma” (breath), because one of their uses was to show the singer where to take breath. Joined together as they soon came to be, these signs look, in the MSS. that have come down to us, like a very puzzling system of shorthand. They were written above the words, as if they had been accents; and not till the tenth century was a red line, the ancestor of our stave, drawn between the two.

The Ambrosian Chant, like the Greek music on which it was probably based, was wholly governed by the words—was, in fact, a recitative depending on the length and quantity of syllables. The Gregorian forced the words to accommodate themselves to the tune, no easy task at times, as anyone may see by trying to chant verse thirty of Psalm lxxviii. People differ about Gregorians, as they do about olives and caviare; when they like them, they like them very much. I once took a Low-Church parson to the Trappist Monastery at Grace Dieu on Charnwood Forest; we went in to vespers, but in about three minutes, he whispered: “I must go; I can’t stand it any longer; it’s like the howling of the damned.” The voices were all old, and some harsh; but I thought the general effect so good that I stayed to the end, anxious though I was to ask my friend how he had got his acquaintance with the music of the nether world.

If practice makes perfect, Gregorians, sung day and night in Monasteries, ought to be very near perfection. Some Monasteries got a special musical reputation, as some of our Cathedrals do nowadays. Chief among these was St. Gall in Switzerland, named after its founder, the Irish disciple of the Irish St. Columban, who stayed behind when his master pushed on into Italy and founded the still more famous Monastery of Bobbio. At St. Gall, about 912, flourished Notker, surnamed the Stammerer, who wrote new Gregorians, and anticipated Handel’s “*Harmonious Blacksmith*,” by setting “*In the midst of life we are in death*,” to notes which reproduced the hammering of workmen at a bridge over an Alpine gorge. Notker, too, modified and beautified the “*Sequences*,” an important part of the Mass service; his fellow monk, Tuotilo, improved the “*Kyrie*.” These bring us to Adam, of St. Victor’s Abbey near Paris, and Bernard of Clairvaux (middle of the twelfth century), and Thomas of Celano, who wrote the “*Dies irae*.” Meanwhile, of course, the instruments were improving. In the famous Utrecht Psalter, which contains the earliest transcript of the Athanasian Creed and is by many placed as early as the fifth century, is figured an organ with two players and four blowers, two on either side, whom the players are leaning over and scolding just as one sees done now at practising times.

About 1000 A.D., Pope Sylvester the Second greatly improved the organ; and during this same century part-singing began in church; but no one knows whether it was adopted from the folk-songs of the outside world, or hit upon by some monk, wearied out with the monotony of the never-ending chants, and driven wild by the false notes of the boys in the Monastery school. Sometime earlier, indeed, Hucbald, the Benedictine of St. Amand in Flanders, went in for part-singing. He, too, invented a new mode of musical notation. He used no notes, but marked the tone by the space in which he wrote the word or syllable corresponding to it. His music, therefore, has an uncanny appearance—fifteen lines enclose fourteen spaces; and while the *Do* of *Domini*, for instance, is, say in the fifth space, the rest of the word will be three or four spaces lower or higher.

A century later than Hucbald, Guido of Arezzo used both lines and spaces, going in also for part-singing, and inventing the

names of the notes. They are the first syllables of a six-line prayer to St. John that he will keep the singers from hoarseness:

Ut (now replaced by Do) queant laxis,
Re—sonare fibris
Mi—ra gestorum,
Fa—mulæ tuorum,
Sol—ve polluti
La—bri reatum, Sancte Johannes.

(That thy servants may be able with free throats to sing the wonders of thy deeds, do thou, holy John, unloose their sin-bound lips.) Here was the solfeggio complete; and Guido had a way of helping his boys through what they called their "crux et tormentum" by arranging the scale on his finger-joints in a way which his pupils found so simple, that by it Pope John the Nineteenth learnt to sing at sight in one lesson! This was a happy thing for Guido; for he had been so misrepresented by his musical rivals that the Pope had called on him to give up his priorship of Avellana; but, finding him so excellent an instructor, he reinstated him.

Franco of Cologne (about 1180), author of "Compendium de Discantu," brings us a step further. His laws of part-writing are in all essentials in use at the present day. Discantus, by the way, or biscantus (French, *déchant*), is a duet (a strange origin for our word *descant*); it soon came to be adorned in its upper notes with flourishes (*fleurettes*), and therefore the lower voice, which sang the *cantus firmus* (steady tune) was called *Tenor* (holding the air).

Music, too, began now to be written more in modern fashion. There were two styles—the square notes (black or open) still used in Catholic Church music, and the nail-and-horseshoe notation used in Germany and Belgium.

Meanwhile secular music had been going on briskly. There were the folk-songs, of which each Teutonic tribe had its own budget, and in which (to judge from Welsh and Irish and Highland) "the Celt" was by no means deficient; and there was the music which the minstrels—a regular tribe, like the gipsies—carried from land to land. These *jongleurs*, *menestriers*, *fableors*, in Italy called *ceretani*, are often wrongly confounded with the poets, troubadours, or minnesingers, frequently of noble birth, who at first employed them to sing their ballads. They were outcasts to whom the Church denied its sacraments, descendants (the Germans tell us) of the old Roman

comedians and gladiators, of whom there had been "schools" made up of all nationalities, and who, when their occupation was gone—thanks partly to Christianity, partly to the poverty caused by the barbarian invasions—wandered far and wide, carrying with them their tricks, and songs, and stories. To them is largely due the similarity of the popular tales over all Europe and Asia; and there was probably a good deal of sameness, too, in the popular music. The same instruments, also, were widely diffused. Ask the average Englishman who invented the bagpipe; he will tell you a Scotchman or an Irishman. Yet the sight of those Italian *pifferari* who have been about among us for the last dozen years might have taught him differently. In the Middle Ages, too, when as yet the harp was the national instrument of the Scot—whether in *Scotia major* (Ireland) or in Albany (Scotland)—the bagpipe was common in Yorkshire. It was, too, in use in Germany (whether with or without bellows), and it is found in Brittany and in Greece too, though there it certainly does not date from classical times.

Another time-honoured instrument is what the Church called *organistrum* (the old French name is "*retel*" or "*rutel*"), of which the hurdy-gurdy is the degenerate descendant. In the ninth century it was very large, needing two performers, one to turn the crank, the other to manage the keys and bridges; but before long its size was reduced, and it became what early writers on music call "the strolling woman's lyre." The Welsh "*crwth*" too (small harp, played with a bow), got widely known under the names of "*crota*" or "*rotta*"; and out of it and the Oriental "*rebab*" or "*rebec*" was shaped the modern violin. But I am not discussing the archæology of fiddles. I have been trying to trace the growth of harmony and part-singing.

Somehow or other the folk-music of the thirteenth century is wholly free from the Church scale, and is built on our modern diatonic—using major and minor keys—major and minor thirds, for instance, which were rejected by pedants like Hucbald, who framed their scales on ill-understood Greek theories. And their instruments prove (like those of the Egyptians) that the lay people must have had some kind of harmony. The construction of the "*crwth*" proves this, unless, indeed, all its six strings were tuned in unison or octaves, which Sir F. Gore-Ouseley assures us they never were. The old Welsh,

therefore, knew something of harmony ; and granting this, we cannot deny the knowledge to their close kinamen, the Irish and Scottish Gael ; and Giraldus Cambrensis is very emphatic on their part-singing. "The Britons," he says, "do not sing in unison like the people of other countries, but in different parts, so that as many parts are heard as there are singers, who all finally unite in consonance and organic melody." The duet, or descant, he speaks of as much practised north of the Humber, one singer holding the note (tenor), the other singing the upper in a soft and pleasing manner," and this kind of singing (rare in other parts of England) came in, he thinks, with the Danes.

Giraldus despised the Saxons so thoroughly that he does not tell us much about their singing ; but their gleemen are proverbial, and probably had made as much progress towards harmony as the Welsh. I believe we were always a musical nation, though probably more so in the North than elsewhere, just as in Alfred's time the learning of the country was nearly all confined to Northumbria. With our Continental Kings came in the newer minstrelsy which had been growing up in France and in Provence. France (the country north of the Loire) had its *trouvères*, Provence its *troubadours*—both courtly poets, who at first only wrote, but soon began also to sing and to accompany their own voices. In Germany they were called *Minne* (Love) singers ; and among them were Prince Witzlav and Walther of the Birdmeadow (Vogelweide) and Henry von Meissen, called *Frauenlob*, because of his constant praise of women, for which the sex were so grateful that the ladies of Mayence carried him to his grave, "which they watered with their tears and with the best of Rhineland wine."

As the music of these courtly singers passed down to the common people, its professors were, like all other mediæval professors, formed into guilds. Such were the German *Meistersingers*, whose guilds lasted on till quite lately ; Lorenz Chappuy, the violinist, (1838), belonged to one of them. They had each their court, according to the instrument they affected—the pipers being the most famous—with mayor, masters, members, and beadle. It was the same in France. The "*Confrérie de St. Julien des Ménestriers*" was the Paris guild, whose seal is dated 1330. They had lands and a chapel: the former were seized ; the latter, with

all its statues, razed to the ground in 1789.*

It was in Paris that part-singing was first made a science. Coussemaker's rare work, "*L'Art Harmonique aux xii^e et xiii^e Siècles*," based on a MS. preserved at Montpellier, proves the existence of a Paris school of counterpoint, whose teaching influenced the Netherlands, and was carried into Italy owing to the sojourn of the Popes at Avignon (1307-1377). This is one of the most important facts of musical history, for Italy, almost untouched by the influence of the troubadours, etc., became in the sixteenth century the home of music for the civilised world. Palestrina (i.e., Giovanni Pierluigi Sante, of Praeneste) would never have arisen but for the preparation which this French teaching gave to the Italian mind. The choruses which he supplied to his friend Felippo Neri's sacred dramas are the beginnings of the opera, and the germ of their style is found both in the old *Parismotets*, and in the Flemish school which grew out of Paris. These Paris musicians had the great merit of thoroughly breaking away from the narrowness of the old Church style. They adapted the popular music—of which the song-book preserved at Loccum Abbey near Bremen contains the oldest examples—and at the same time they systematised it, setting music, in fact, on the groove which has led it to its grand triumphs. Why England fell out of the reckoning ; why, from having been one of the most musical of nations, she became for centuries almost silent, adding nothing to the work which was perfected in one direction by Italians, in another by Germans, it is hard to tell. Some attribute all our æsthetic shortcomings to the Puritans ; others say we were too busy inventing machinery, and at the same time forming our Colonial Empire. But the fact remains. Edward the First, though he is falsely charged with massacring the Welsh bards, was a great patron of minstrels, and spent two hundred pounds (equivalent to some three thousand now) in music alone when his son was knighted. When Henry the Fifth was crowned, "the number of harpers in the Abbey of the West Minster was exceeding great." Agincourt was the occasion of a grand song, preserved among the Pepys MSS. at Cambridge—see Chap-

* In England they had guilds. A pillar at Beverly (1432) is inscribed "this pillar made the meynstrvls."

pell's "Popular Music." "Owre Kynge went forth to Normandy with grace and myght of chyvalry. The God for hym wrought marvylusly." Henry the Eighth, too, and Elizabeth were patrons of music; but somehow—though Tallis is no mean composer—we had no Palestrina, no Corelli, no Bach, no Handel, not even a Lully.

Why? He who can answer that question may perhaps be able to do what I know I have not succeeded in doing—trace with firm hand the first beginnings of harmony in music.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

THE hotel to which the cabman bore the Burtons as, in his eyes, the best in London, was at least, at the date of this history, the newest, though it can no longer claim that distinction.

It was a large pile, not far from Charing Cross, and in the sumptuousness of its fresh paint, its gilding, its upholstery, it was magnificent enough to please even Mr. Burton's somewhat exactly florid taste. As for Tilly, half-asleep as she was, she felt that her adventures were about to begin, as she followed the chambermaid up a shallow flight of steps to a room finer than any she had ever occupied before. The MacAndrews' Edinburgh house in stately Moray Place could boast nothing so brave as the crimson and gold of this guest-chamber; and as for the Manse, its blameless austerity suffered an affront as she arraigned it in her imagination and found it lacking.

Guests who arrive at a London hotel without luggage, and especially guests of a manifestly provincial order, are not usually received with cordiality, but Uncle Bob—perhaps by his absolute certainty of himself—had a way of commanding belief in others. The doubts in the mind of the manager, if that astute person suffered such, were dispelled by the jingle of the gold Mr. Burton drew carelessly from his pocket.

Uncle Bob loved the sound of that chinking gold; loved it for the respect it bought for him now as heretofore. The arrival of the luggage, for which a porter was dispatched in a cab, was a further

guarantee, and by nightfall the travellers were settled in their new quarters, and Uncle Bob had won the respect of half the waiters by the lavishness of his orders and the capacity of his appetite.

With some dim idea, perhaps, of shielding Tilly—more likely out of an ostentatious desire to appear as rich as he was—he had ordered a private sitting-room for her special use. It was a large room, too large for one solitary little woman, and its range of windows looked obliquely upon the lion-guarded column, and on the ever-varying crowd that filled Trafalgar Square.

To Tilly, as surely to everyone who sees it for a first, or a second, or a third time, this endlessly changing and unending throng is as curious and thought-compelling a spectacle as one could well behold. So many a thousand faces, and never two faces alike; so many varying interests; so many out-leaping desires; so many hopes, fears, despairs, joys, in which yet no barter is possible! Here in London, the hugest hive of commerce the world knows, there are some things in which no man can trade—the heart's bitterness, the heart's delight, who can share or exchange these?

All those varying emotions, all those three-volumed romances, each with a plot, a beginning and an end to it, were walking about sedately or hurrying briskly, hidden under top-coats and tall hats, in the morning when Tilly's young eyes first looked on the moving panorama.

Omnibuses were doing a cheerful trade and went by laden with City men, who smoked, or read the morning papers, or exchanged words, or shook their fingers at each other in mysterious symbol; City women, there were too—an outcome, these, of this century—cashiers, and clerks and post-office girls, mostly sedate and business-like, and mostly dressed in black. The young working-woman of this generation is a great deal wiser than her grandmother, or her mother, for the matter of that; she is quite as independent as her brother, and could go round the world alone, without suffering so much as a blush or a tremor all the way.

To Tilly, fresh from country silences, it was all a trifle fearful, as well as very wonderful. But for this moving outside world, she might have felt her new grandeur a little oppressive. The hurry without was mated with the silence within. Uncle Bob had strolled off after their early breakfast to smoke; she had unpacked

her modest boxes; she had taken out a bit of needlework and laid it beside her, and there was nothing else that she greatly inclined to do.

She had examined the great room from end to end, and looked at her own reflection in the mirrors from every possible angle and degree of distance; and again and again, after each fresh tour of inspection, she was drawn to the window to watch big London running to and fro in the misty brightness of the November morning.

It had sufficed for one whole day, but by the next she began to grow restless, and to long—as only a country-bred girl can long—for the freshness of the wind on her cheeks. The waiter's silent and frequent appearances, too, disconcerted her. Ought one to have a new order ready for each apparition of his head within the door? Or could it be possible that he was keeping guard over her? She did not like either alternative, and the longing to go out grew from the moment she first conceived it, till she felt that it must be gratified.

She ran upstairs and put on her best frock. It had done duty for many a Sunday in the minister's pew at home, where it had been duly honoured with its meed of rustic admiration; but its lustre seemed somehow dimmed under the new conditions. She met her own reflection in the long wardrobe mirror with a dissatisfied shake of the head.

"You are all wrong, all wrong, Tilly; but never mind," she consoled herself, "you are going out where there are so many people that nobody will ever see you."

She looked into the sitting-room, but Uncle Bob had not returned, and she went on alone.

Several people, among whom were some men, were chatting in the hall of the hotel or smoking on the steps, and most of them turned to look at her as she passed them with a light step and a well-carried head.

Tilly humbly thought that all the looks were in disparagement of her unfashionable dress. She could not tell what a quaint and pleasing picture she made in the dark blue gown which the best efforts of the country dressmaker had not managed to spoil, because Tilly's own good taste had restricted her in ornament—a dress that hung in plain folds to the top of her neat, thick boots, a little cloak of the same material, and a hat with a curly brim, under which her blue eyes glanced

fearlessly. Miss Tilly might have ransacked half London, and not found a costume nearly so becoming.

One of the strangers standing on the steps threw away the end of his cigar, and sauntering down behind her, followed her into the thronging world outside. What a teeming world it was! In Lilliesmuir every man, woman, and child, not to speak of each cat and dog, knew Miss Burton, the minister's cousin. A walk down the long, straggling village street was, in its way, a royal procession, made up of kindly words and greetings; here the faces which looked into hers wore a blank unrecognition. Tilly had yet to learn that London is the loneliest place in all the world. Not in the inviolable silence of her own brown moors; not on the heights of her own remote hills; may one be so entirely isolated as in this great city, where with every beat of time a new footfall meets your ear, a new face scans yours before it vanishes.

As yet, however, there was no reason why Tilly should feel anything but the sense of exhilaration that happy and contented people experience in any briskly-moving scene. She had turned towards the Strand, and though a great many people looked at her, there were so many more who did not look, that she was comforted, and began to forget her dress. She had a lurking wonder—which did not amount to a hope—whether the young man who had befriended her uncle last night might not reappear this morning. To her inexperience it seemed quite possible. She half wished that he would, and that she might speak to him; for it lay burdensomely on her conscience that they had asked him to dinner, when neither the dinner, the hosts, nor the welcome were likely to be forthcoming. And what would he think of their gratitude then?

Entertained with her thoughts, everything went well till she essayed to cross the busy street. Now, in all her brief career, though she had, it must be told, ridden plough-horses barebacked when she was small, and in later days had scampered fearlessly over the moors on Cousin Spencer's shaggy Sheltie, Miss Tilly had never hazarded the dangers of a London crossing. To the timid it bristles with perils, and Tilly's first futile attempt to overcome them left her with less courage to try a second.

Here was a chance, indeed, for the modest clerk! Why was he not here to

avail himself of it? It was not his voice, though it was also a man's, but one never heard before, that said with careless ease:

"Will you allow me to see you across?"

She looked up into the strange face, rather startled for a moment, but the situation was dire; she had come farther than she knew, and she felt certain that the only way home lay on the other side of that unbridged stream.

"Thank you," she said hesitatingly; "I shall be very glad if you will."

"Then may I ask you to take my arm? We shall wait till the stream divides. Everything comes to him who waits. Here is our chance; we had better take it while it is offered us."

He led her safely over, under the heads of cab and omnibus horses with what seemed to Tilly an admirable calmness.

"Thank you," she said gratefully, looking up with frank eyes; "I could not have got over alone."

"Probably not," said the stranger with gravity.

"Are all crossings as bad as that?" she asked, not liking to turn away abruptly.

"Some are much worse. There's a hopeless one at the Mansion House, for instance, where quite a large number of people come to a disastrous end every year."

Tilly looked at him doubtfully.

"I can go alone now, thank you," she said. "It is quite a straight road to the hotel."

"May I venture to ask which hotel?"

She named it.

"Not quite straight, I think. There are at least two turnings and two crossings, each as formidable as the one we have surmounted."

"Then I needn't have crossed here?"

"That depends on where you want to go," he smiled. "If to the hotel, then not. Will you give me the further pleasure of showing you the way?"

"I think I remember it," she said, not quite liking to accept, and yet equally fearing to be rude in refusing this stranger's offer.

At Lilliesmuir she would have known just what to do, in the impossible case of anybody wanting to help her there. Suppose—for mere argument sake—she had fallen into the river, and had been rescued by some unknown person, the inevitable conclusion would be an invitation to the Manse for rest and refresh-

ment, and the minister's solemn thanks. The cases were hardly parallel. Must she walk with this gentleman in her train to their present dwelling-place, and seek out Uncle Bob to discharge their obligation to the stranger?

She looked so grave over this proposition that a lurking smile came into her companion's eyes.

"As I am going to the hotel also, perhaps you will allow me to walk behind you," he suggested. "Then if you should happen to forget the way——"

"Are you living there?" Tilly asked.

"I am living there. I think I had the pleasure of meeting your father in the smoking-room."

"My uncle," she amended.

"Your uncle," he bowed. "We had some talk which I, for one, found interesting."

"Then," she remarked, "if we are both going to the same place, I don't see why you should walk behind me."

"Thank you," the stranger answered. "I will walk beside you, if you will allow. If we take this turning you will find it quieter."

"This isn't the way I came," she said, looking about her.

"It is quite as near, and we shall avoid crossings, which I think you do not like."

"We haven't any at home," she said with a laugh. "Except on market-days, the sight of a single dog-cart is enough to bring everybody to door or window."

"It must be very quiet."

"It is quiet here too," she asserted, "after that noisy street. Is that water shining before us?"

"That is the river; the great Thames. This is the Embankment. Somewhere here, they say, your poet Burns is to have a statue erected in his honour, one of these days."

"How do you know he is my poet?" she asked naively, turning round quickly to him.

"Mr. Burton informed me he was Scotch," said her companion with admirable gravity.

Before they had compassed the short distance to the hotel—and to his honour it must be said, he took her there without deviation—he had learned a good deal more about her than that she was Scotch. Since he knew Uncle Bob, Tilly felt that it must be all right, and she chatted without reserve.

They went up the steps of the hotel

together almost like old acquaintances; Tilly was smiling at something her companion said when two ladies, who had sent for a hansom, came out from the hall.

They both looked rather fixedly at the pair, and one of them turned to watch her as she nodded good-bye to her new friend and ran upstairs alone.

"I told you so, Honoria," said this lady to the other in a tone of satisfied conviction.

"I don't know, Maria," said the one addressed as Honoria.

"I know; a bold, forward, pert little chit. I noticed her at dinner last night. I believe that man and she never met before this morning! I saw her pass him in the hall as she went out—and to think of her running about the streets alone!"

"I thought it was the circumstance of her not being alone, you objected to. Poor little one! she seems to have no one to look after her."

"Now you will make it your mission to look after her, I suppose!" said Maria, with a toss of her befeathered head. "Well, we can't stop all day. Tell the man to drive to Marshall's first."

Meanwhile Tilly, all unconscious of the criticisms which were being passed on her behaviour, peeped into the sitting-room, and finding her uncle there, went in with a skip, and dropped him a lively curtsy. Then she flitted to the long mirror inserted in the wall, and for a few moments surveyed herself gravely.

"Well, little lass, and where have you been?" growled Uncle Bob from the depths of his chair.

"I've been making a new acquaintance, Uncle Bob." She turned upon him: "Am I so very dowdy?"

He looked at the straight, slim figure, the quaint, becoming dress, the hat with the curly brim, and the bright eyes under it.

"Pretty trim, I should say," was his verdict. "Been getting some new toggery?"

"No. I told you, making acquaintance with an acquaintance of yours."

"An acquaintance of mine?"

"He said he met you in the smoking-room, and that he had enjoyed talking to you."

She retailed this little compliment with pride.

"A tall chap with a yellow beard—younghish?"

"Not young," she said decidedly. "Forty at least. I do think Londoners

are the most obliging people in the world. What trouble they give themselves! I might have been killed at a crossing but for this one, and I should certainly have lost my way and never found the road back to you any more."

"I guess you've got a good Scotch tongue in your head," said Uncle Bob, with a laugh, taking a light view of this possible tragedy.

"Perhaps they wouldn't have understood me," she said demurely. "I don't find I've acquired a Cockney accent yet, Uncle Bob." She came and perched herself on the corner of his chair: "Do you remember asking that poor young man to dinner—was it—or supper?"

"What poor young man?" Mr. Burton's instincts were generally hospitable, and how was he to remember all the young fellows whom he had from time to time invited to come and witness his greatness?

"The one who helped us last night. If he goes to Mrs. Popham's——"

"Faith, he'll get nothing but the cold shoulder for his pains," said Uncle Bob with a huge laugh, able to take a humorous view of the situation now that it was two days old.

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Tilly.

"Eh, lass! there's nothing to do. Would you have me go round to all the banks in London and ask for a young chap who showed an old chap the way to Prince's Gate? As well seek a needle in a hay-stack. We must make it up to the new man instead, Tilly."

"That won't be the same," she said, getting up and walking the length of the room. "I must do something, anyhow," she said with energy, as she turned to face him again. "Do you know, I'm not like any other girl in London."

"Did the new acquaintance tell you that?" he asked with a grin.

"No. Do you think I'd have let him?" she said indignantly. "I didn't need to be told. I had only to look—you have only to look—to see for yourself."

"Well, there are shops enough, and near enough, if that's all, my lass; it's easy settled. We'll have a cruise round them to-morrow."

"I won't spend much," she said, coming back to her perch.

"You'll spend what I give you to spend," he said, dictatorially. "That's a bargain, and you can give me a kiss."

That night, at table d'hôte—the only meal she took in public—Tilly found herself seated near her new acquaintance, and learned that his name was Behrens.

"Got a foreign cut about him," said Uncle Bob. "But he seems a knowing chap."

The lady named Honoria, whom the hotel books could have shown to be Miss Walton, was also seated near, and looked at Tilly very often. Once, when their eyes met, she smiled, and Tilly smiled back, pleased with the friendly overture.

Miss Walton saw nothing very blame-worthy in Tilly's conduct. She did not originate many remarks, and mostly listened in silence to a conversation carried on across her person—a conversation, or rather a monologue; for when Uncle Bob held the theme he scarce allowed his neighbour to insert a word. His talk was enlightening enough in its own way, though it chiefly concerned the chances of fortune on Australian sheep-runs, and the gains to be wrung from the dead-meat trade. To him, at least, it was so stimulating, that in the glow of his satisfaction he invited Mr. Behrens to pay them a visit in Tilly's sitting-room, and taste a particular brand of champagne which had pleased his fancy.

If Miss Walton were minded to befriend Tilly's solitude, her chances seemed to diminish with the passing days. Tilly, indeed, could hardly complain of solitude, since whenever she had her uncle's company she had Mr. Behrens's also.

He made himself very pleasant, and he knew a great deal, and seemed to have nothing to do with his leisure, save to bestow it on his new friends. He arranged Tilly's sight-seeing in the most skilful fashion, and proved himself a competent guide, guessing accurately just the sort of information that would interest her, and not overtax Uncle Bob's somewhat limited intelligence.

Tilly took it all pleasantly and easily enough. Mr. Behrens was her uncle's friend, and as such she accepted him without knowing very much about him, or analysing the slenderness of their knowledge concerning him.

In this respect Tilly and her uncle were

alike guileless as babes. For a man who had knocked about the world, he was surprisingly simple, though he thought himself so cunning. Yet even across his dense brain there sometimes crept a passing wonder whether this was the best sort of life for Tilly—his little Tilly, for whom he had planned, and schemed, and grown rich these many years, and for whom he meant to make the world so beautiful.

"You haven't bought those gowns yet, little lass," he said one night, when by a rare chance the obliging Behrens was absent.

"How could I, dear, when we've been seeing half London? In spite of his great friendship for you, Mr. Behrens would hardly like to be asked to choose my dresses."

"You don't take to him, Tilly?"

"Upon the whole, I take to you more," she said demurely; "and it is rather a treat to have you all to myself just for once."

"I wish you had a woman friend," he said with unwonted gravity, not meeting this sally.

"A woman friend?" she said. "What kind of a woman friend? 'Lisbeth from the Manse, perhaps, to snub me as she snubs cousin Spencer? Or—Mrs. Popham? I believe you are hankering after Mrs. Popham more than I am!"

"Mrs. Popham is no friend of yours or mine," he began with such threatening vehemence that she hastened to say:

"Well, then, there are those cousins of mine we've got to discover. There are sure to be girls among them. Very likely they are all girls. Will six or eight women friends who are cousins as well, please you, Uncle Bob?"

"Time enough to say when we do discover them. There's no hurry, lass; we've done without them a goodish bit, and we can get along wanting them still. You can't take your own kith and kin up and drop them again if they're not to your taste. We'll ca' canny, my woman."

"That's a very pleasing sentiment," said Tilly, giving him a hug of reward for it; "if ever you should tire of me, Uncle Bob, I'll quote your own words against you."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 964. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IX. IN THE STORM.

A MOMENT later the storm descended in all its fury. The wind no longer moaned, but howled like a legion of demons. The trees around the little cottage writhed and tossed, and flung out threatening arms at one another, and shook their beautiful leaves down on the sodden earth as if in very impotence of senseless fury.

The rain streamed down in one terrific torrent, amidst which the lightning flashed and played like vivid flame. It was a terrible scene; and Gretchen, hurriedly closing her window, sat there trembling and aghast.

"Oh! why would he not wait?" she asked herself again and again, picturing that lonely figure on the dark, unsheltered road, amid the warring elements. "And who could have told him to come here? How cruel! how shameful! How angry Neale will be!"

The magic of that name for a moment swayed her with the old resistless mastery. Almost unconsciously she sank down on her knees beside the bed, and buried her face in the soft white coverlid.

"Oh, love! why are you not here?" her heart cried out as the tempest raged without. "Can't you feel I want you?"

But the solitude was unanswering, the quiet of the room was undisturbed by step or shadow; though, indeed, it seemed to the girl that the passionate call and crave of her heart must surely bridge the abyss of space and time, and echo at the doors of

that other heart to which she had appealed.

She had been alone a long time now—long, at least, to one who measured time by the absence of the only being who made time endurable.

It seemed as if months, instead of weeks, had passed since she had come to this little quiet nook, buried from sight and sound of the outer world. The days had been spent among books, or in rambles through the lonely lanes and quiet meadows. Her only comfort had been Neale's letters, and they were neither so frequent nor so long as she could have desired.

Till to-night, when Adrian Lyle's presence had broken in on her solitude, she had been as lonely and as undisturbed as the Sleeping Princess of immortal fame. Each morning, when she rose, she told herself, "He will be here to-day!" and each evening, as her eyes closed in slumbers that were too light and too dream-filled for rest, she would murmur, "To-morrow; surely he will come to-morrow."

She knelt there now for long, listening half in terror to the raging storm, yet loyally seeing in it both fair and good excuse for that deferred presence which, to her, embodied all that was loved and valued in life.

The storm at last began to abate its violence. The rain fell in slow, plashing drops; the wind died away with long, low moans; the thunder no longer crashed and rolled through the black vaults above; and the lightning only played fitfully and irregularly along the brightening line that already spoke of dawn.

Gretchen rose to her feet at last; she felt that sleep was impossible. She went to her window and drew up the blind, and looked out on the devastated garden. As

she looked, a faint pale gleam lit up the eastern sky, and slowly spread itself along the heavy banks of clouds.

Her eyes turned to that gleam, joyful that it meant another dawn, yet heavy with the shadows of memory such as daylight always brought her.

She remembered that sunrise in Venice—all its wonder and its glory, and the rapture of that other presence that had watched it by her side.

And one other morning she thought of now—when they had passed through Vienna on their return journey. They were to leave by the early train, and she had risen at six o'clock to have a peep at the wonderful city, which as yet was unknown and marvellous as a child's dream to her vivid fancy.

How it all came back: the sumptuous room; the bare polished floor over which she had moved with rosy, naked feet! She seemed to see herself creeping, eager and curious as a child, to the lace-enshrouded window and opening it, and looking out on the street below that was all damp and cool from the passage of the water-carts. She could recall the very look of the opposite houses, with their jealously-closed shutters; even the café, where a waiter was lazily opening doors and windows, and yawning vigorously over the performance. A cloud of pigeons was fluttering amidst eaves and nooks formed by balconies and arches. It seemed to her she heard their soft coos, the movement of their rustling wings; and all the golden light and glory of the day swept once more over her senses and made her heart thrill at the remembrance of her own great happiness.

Then, the story of her life had just begun. Now, it had gathered pages instead of lines; it held pictures, scenes, incidents, she never wearied of recalling.

As she stood by the open window the scents of the jasmine and roses touched her senses with a subtle pain, for which she could not account. The dark, dreary eyes grew wistful; a little shiver shook her slender frame. Then, quite suddenly, she saw the light spread glowing and glorious over all the dim grey sky. She heard a flutter of wings, a chirp of waking birds, and half-unconsciously her glance fell earthwards, and in its wanderings rested with a sudden startled wonder on the fallen trunk of a huge tree, which only the night before had towered in lofty grandeur among its compeers.

There it lay now—broken, bruised; its

leaves soddened; its boughs cracked and bare; a melancholy and forlorn thing in the brightness and glory of the awakening day. Pityingly and regretfully the girl's eyes rested on it, and as their scrutiny grew more intense it seemed to her that something else lay there amidst that entangling mass of leaves and broken boughs. Involuntarily she leant forwards, shading her eyes from the now vivid glow of sunlight, painfully conscious of a terrible fear, which robbed her cheeks of colour and filled her heart with an intense and inexplicable dread.

A moment more and she had left the window, and thrust her feet into slippers, and flung a warm and heavy cloak over her white draperies.

Then swift as thought she flew down the stairs, and opened the door, and so crossing with a lapwing's speed the intervening space, found herself leaning, terrified and helpless, over the prostrate figure of a man.

As the horror slowly passed from her eyes, she saw—who—it was. She remembered, with piteous and bewildered self-reproach, the crash that had mingled with the thunder. The huge tree had struck him as his hand was on the gate. She saw the dreadful gash on the uncovered head, the blood that lay in a pool beneath it.

So still, so grey, looked the face upturned there with closed eyes, in the light and glory of the June dawn, that she fancied he was dead, and in her terror screamed aloud the word, and rushed back to the house to awake the sleeping servants.

The gardener was the first who heard her cry, and followed her with all speed to the spot. It was a task of no small difficulty to clear away the heavy boughs and branches from round and about that helpless figure. Then she tried to lift it, but in vain.

"He be powerful heavy," he said, scratching his head and looking helplessly at Gretchen. "Maybe I'd better go for help!"

"Yes, go, go!" cried the girl frantically, as she tried to stanch the terrible wound, and looked with ever-growing dread at the pallid, hueless face. "And send some one to the village for the doctor. He is not dead. I can feel his heart beat. Only, for Heaven's sake, make haste."

She supported the head against her knees, scarce knowing how she did it. It was so terrible, to think that all those

hours he had been lying here so close to her, bleeding slowly to death, and she—unconscious of it all!

She raised one hand, but it dropped heavily back, yet she saw the pale lips suddenly quiver, and the eyes unclose. One fleeting glance, betraying no consciousness, giving no recognition, and again Adrian Lyle relapsed into insensibility.

She wetted his cold brow with the rain-water, she chafed his hands in her own small trembling palms, but he gave no sign of awaking.

Never had sound of human steps seemed so welcome to the girl as when she caught the echo of old Job's, and those of the labourer he had brought with him from a neighbouring field. Between them they managed to lift the unconscious man, and bore him into the cottage, and laid him down on the bed which Gretchen had ordered the woman to prepare.

She made old Job and his wife remove the wet and soaking clothes, and wrap the cold and pulseless limbs in hot blankets. She herself prepared hot wine, and tried to pour it through the clenched teeth; but it was useless.

It seemed long, long hours before the village doctor came. Fortunately he was a clever and also a reticent man. He asked but few questions; the case explained itself. Concussion of the brain—in all probability to be followed by rheumatic fever, after those long hours of exposure and loss of blood.

"It will be very serious," he said, glancing from the unconscious man to the lovely terror-stricken face of the watcher. "I had better send you a nurse."

"No—please do not," pleaded Gretchen in her imperfect English. "I am strong and young. I can do all that is necessary, with the assistance of my servant."

"As you please, madam," said the doctor gruffly. "Only, when matters grow critical, you will find it is impossible. Is the gentleman a friend of yours?"

"Yes," said the girl. "At least, I met him abroad some months ago—that is all."

The doctor looked sharply at her. There was some mystery, he knew, about the lady at The Laurels. He saw how lovely she was, and how young. He noted the circle on her slender finger, and thought he must be a strange husband who would care to leave so young and fair a wife to the solitude which he knew had been her portion.

"Perhaps," he said doubtfully. "you

had better communicate with the gentleman's friends. Do you know his address?"

"No," said Gretchen. "I have no idea of it."

"You had better search his pockets then. There may be a letter or card in them to give the information. At present I can do nothing more. I will return again this evening."

He went away, leaving Gretchen more helpless and miserable than she had ever felt.

The mystery of Adrian Lyle's presence here was inexplicable. She knew that no one save Neale could give her his address; and Mr. Lyle had said he had been told she had sent for him—that she was ill almost to death.

The search in his pockets produced nothing, save a little worn pocket Testament, which never left his possession. His bag, which old Job had discovered close by the gate, contained only a change of linen. There was not a scrap of paper even, to give any clue to where he had come from, or how he had discovered Gretchen's retreat.

As the hours wore on he became delirious, and the girl grew really alarmed.

"I must write to Neale," she thought, "and tell him to come at once." FANCY

She left the sick room, and went downstairs and into the little parlour that was all embowered in roses and bright with sunshine. Yet something about it struck cold and chill on her senses, and she felt a vague terror of its intense loneliness.

She sat down at the little table, and drew paper and pens slowly before her. To write to Neale was always a labour of love. Why, then, this sudden and unsurmountable dread?

Hurriedly she began to trace the first few words. English seemed easier to her to write than to speak. She had penned but some half-dozen lines, when the sound of a step without, made her lift her head and look eagerly out of the window.

It was the postman she had heard. He was close to her, and with a sudden impulse she leant out of the window and asked for the letters. He handed her one. A lovely flush of colour dyed her cheeks; her eyes glowed like stars. It was from him—her love—her idol—her beloved. With a sudden rush of pulses, with a heart of flame, she tore the cover asunder and seized upon the words with devouring eyes.

One moment—two—three—then the

colour faded to deadly white, the leaping pulses beat with heavy, stony throbs.

"Gone away!" the pale lips murmured. "Gone away! . . . Not one farewell look, or word, or kiss. Gone—away!"

Her eyes in all their agony of appeal met only those cold written words; saw only as an insult to her passionate love the filmy slip of paper enclosed. Then, with one exceeding bitter cry, she threw herself face downwards on the floor, the letter crushed in her hand; her whole frame racked by sobs that threatened to suffocate her as they tore her breast and broke from her quivering lips.

He had gone! He had left her! That was all she could remember. Not a thousand explanations or excuses could soften the cruelty of those words. After these lonely weeks—these long, dull days, when her every thought had been of him, he could calmly depart for some far-off land without sparing her one hour to say farewell. All her watching, her prayers, her longings, seemed flung back on her now as things useless and undesired. She would have walked barefoot a hundred miles to see him, to look once more on the beloved face, to touch the fond lips that had sworn such eternal love to hers; and he—he had not made one effort, nor attempted one sacrifice in order to give her such consolation. All her wealth of love, her patience, her tenderness, had not been powerful enough to draw him to her side, while she——!

Alas! for the wide, wide difference between a man's love and a woman's. What would she not have done, suffered, sacrificed, only to purchase one hour of his presence?

After a time the first passion of her grief spent itself. She rose and shook back her disordered hair, and stumbled with blind, unsteady steps, back to the table where her letter lay. She looked at it as a stranger might have looked. It seemed as if long, long years had passed since, glad and hopeful, she had penned those lines. No need to send them—now.

She took the paper and tore it slowly into shreds. The halo of that sham hallucination with which she had crowned a man's selfish passion faded with each wasted word.

She sickened with pain as she did it, remembering the hopes that were ended, the dreams that were dead. As the last fragment fluttered to her feet she closed the writing-case with resolute hand, then

moved slowly away. At the door she turned and looked back, seeming to see the ghost of her girlish self, quivering with love, and life, and hope; the brightest, loveliest thing that that old parlour had ever seen.

So laggard a step, so wan and sad a face, had never belonged to that Gretchen of an hour ago. The thought of that old self and the pity she felt for it, and the utter impossibility that it could ever, ever again come back to her, shook her once more with a tempest of piteous grief.

"Oh—he might have come," she cried, and the tears rushed down her pale cheeks. "He would have come had he loved me as I love him."

The tones of her voice had lost all their soft, rich music. It was as if her very life had been withdrawn from all that nourished and supported it. She was a woman now, a woman who had learnt the meanings of suffering at one stroke. A woman—alas! alas! the pity of it—never more to be a girl glad and gay of heart for very youth and delight of living, and of love, and all youth's passionate blind faith in what was—loved!

That night the doctor spoke seriously of his patient's condition to Gretchen. His keen eye detected that some sorrow or trouble had fallen upon the girl's young life, and he could not but compassionate her present situation.

"My husband has gone abroad to join his regiment," she said, and said it coldly and calmly as one who had been used to such partings. "But I am sure it would not be for him to wish his friend removed from here if his condition be so critical as you say. He must remain till he gets stronger. I—and my old servant will do our best for him."

"As you please, madam," said the old man gravely. "But I must tell you it will be a long case."

"That," she said with a little odd gesture, "does make no difference. It will but help me to pass the time."

CHAPTER X.

SOME MORE CAPRICES.

"A TELEGRAM from Neale," said Sir Roy at breakfast, the morning after Adrian Lyle's departure. "Good heavens—off directly to Madras—regiment under orders!"

He threw down the little pink paper, and looked at his daughter in consternation.

Her face expressed more relief than surprise.

"It is sudden," she said. "Perhaps you had better go up to town to see him."

"I will," said Sir Roy, who seemed overwhelmed at the news. "Poor boy, how unfortunate!"

"Oh no," said Alexis coolly. "It is as well he should undergo the 'baptism of fire.' He is just one of those happy-go-lucky persons who never come to grief."

But Sir Roy, who saw danger threatening his pet scheme, was by no means comfortable.

"Won't you come up, too?" he urged, "The poor boy can't get away to see us — we ought surely to go to him."

"I hate parting scenes," said Alexis coldly. "I should be expected to weep, and you know I never do—in public. Perhaps there would be others going to see the troops off. Melodramatic display, crying women, squalling babies, untuneful bands, noise, turmoil, emotion, all joined with the smell of tar and oil, and dirty ropes, and heaving water—all things I detest. No, I think I will not go. You can make him my farewells. We are neither of us impassioned lovers, as you know."

Sir Roy was silent. He looked and felt disturbed, but he knew better than to waste arguments or persuasions on his daughter. Perhaps if he acquiesced with her, she would go. It was more than probable.

However, Alexis had no intention of going. She ordered and arranged everything for her father, and was almost affectionate to him in her farewells; but she in no way changed her first decision, and Sir Roy took the early train to London in solitary glory.

Having seen him off, Alexis went to her room, and had herself dressed for church in an exquisite costume of pale grey.

She sent Lady Breresford a message desiring to know if she cared to accompany her, and was conscious of a feeling of relief when she received an answer in the negative.

The bells had just ceased ringing as she drove up to the door, and many eyes turned towards that beautiful figure sweeping in indolent grace up the aisle to the Abbey pew. Though her head was bent down in unaccustomed humility, yet Alexis Kenyon caught the flutter of white robes, and was dimly and almost angrily conscious of an answering tremor in her own

heart. The knowledge of anything so unusual and so uncalled-for, roused all her pride and coldness, nor did she attempt to lift her eyes to where the figures of the Rector and Curate were standing. But when a strange voice fell on her ear, she could not help one quick glance at the reading desk. The Rector was in his accustomed place, but a stranger stood where Adrian Lyle was wont to stand, and a feeling of disappointment at an unverified expectation crept into Alexis Kenyon's heart as she noted the fact.

It was swept away immediately by a tide of angry shame. Why should she care who conducted the service? Why should it matter to her if that grave face, and that brow of power and thought, were not at hand, for her scornful eyes to criticise?

All the same, the service seemed to her a more meaningless form even than usual. The Rector's oily voice and safely-grounded platitudes irritated her nerves to an almost unbearable degree.

Despite these facts, however, she waited in her carriage till the reverend gentleman came out from the vestry, unsurprised and stole-less, his ordinary, comfortable-looking self, and graciously invited him to lunch at the Abbey.

The invitation was immediately accepted, despite the fact that the strange Curate, who had been hurriedly telegraphed for, would have to take his cold lamb and claret in the solitude of the Rectory parlour, and under the supervision of the Rectory housekeeper.

Alexis Kenyon leant haughtily and negligently back on her luxurious cushions, listening to the old man's unctuous talk, and wondering whether he would see fit to mention the cause of Adrian Lyle's absence.

He did at last, in the form of a complaint, and as a disturbance to his own comfort and convenience.

Alexis listened with her coldest air; but in her heart she wondered from whom the mysterious summons had come. He had told her once that he had no relatives, and very few friends. Yet something very urgent must have caused him to risk offending the Rector, and neglecting his duties.

The growing consciousness that his absence disturbed her, that the cause of it had even been the reason of her present boredom, was sufficient reason for Alexis Kenyon to be all that was most capricious.

languid, and disdainful during the luncheon, and indeed for the rest of the afternoon.

She tried Lady Breresford's temper so severely that that usually amiable dowager retreated as speedily as possible to the solitude of her own pretty boudoir. The men seemed amused, and Fay laughed and put it down to the effects of church-going; but Alexis herself knew well enough the reason, though she disdained to acknowledge it.

They had tea on the lawn about five o'clock, after which the Rector took a prosy farewell, and was driven back to the comfortable Rectory and the neglected Curate.

Alexis went within and wrote two letters: one was to Neale, bidding him a cool, and not very regretful farewell; the other, to a lady in London, who had told her she was in want of a governess.

"I have heard of an excellent one," wrote the girl. "Well educated, refined, capable in every way. She is very poor. I will be her reference if you will take her at once, as I know she is in very straitened circumstances. It is not often I ask a favour of anyone; but I do ask this of you, and only beg you to keep my name secret in the matter."

The letters sealed and addressed, she felt more at ease. She did not know the person on whose behalf she had interested herself. In all probability, she would never even see her; but all the same she wished to help her to the independence she sought, just because no one would believe she had ever given the matter another thought.

"He said I had made quite a fine art of selfishness," she told herself, standing there by her window in the bright June sunset, and gazing down the long winding avenue. "No doubt he is right."

While she stood there the bells began to ring for evening service. She listened to them with a vague impatience and restlessness. How was it that she, to whom all religion had been indifferent, all forms a weariness, should hear those bells as one who hears a tale of pathos and regret; should see old dreams arise, old fancies dying, all things of youth, and hope, and tenderness come back in mournful resurrection? How was it, too, that as their cadence rose and fell on the evening air, they brought the low, rich tones of a remembered voice to her ears—a voice that had dared to tell her the truth of herself, her follies, her arrogance, her selfishness; yet told it

in such guise that she recognised its truth with more of shame than anger; that she acknowledged its rebuke with more of meekness than of pride?

There must have been something in Alexis Kenyon's nature not yet utterly obscured by the languor and indolence of fashionable life, and the vanities and adulation of the world she had ruled—something not altogether so cold, so cruel, so purposeless as she would have had men believe—and that something it was that Adrian Lyle's words had stirred from its long and indolent repose, and brought face to face with her once affected incredulity, till she saw herself as he saw her, and felt bitterly ashamed of the picture.

Slowly, sweetly, the bells rang on, over woods and meadows golden in the sunlight; over quiet homes and pastures, and all the simple, homely things of country life. And the mistress of all these wide domains stood there in the rosy glow of the evening light, gazing on it all with eyes too weary for tears, with a heart too bitter for peace; and ever and always before her, and looking back to her own, there rose a face whose grave rebuke stung her to the quick; whose pity and contempt showed her her own egotism in its true light, and swept over her with the force of a merited reproach.

"Why should I care?" she said at last, breaking that long spell of thought with an impatience that was almost anger. "I never have cared before. Others have blamed me, others have accused me of spoiling their lives, and it never gave me a disturbed hour. What is he but one among many; with a little more force of character perhaps—a little more earnestness of purpose—but that is all! Why should I care? He does not."

Despite herself she felt the colour spring to her face even as the unuttered thought sprang into her mind. Therein lay the sting of her life's first humiliation. One man had dared to resist her, had dared to speak cold, hard, unvarnished truth to her dainty ears.

To her temper, so imperious and arrogant, no slight could have been greater. It moved her to surprise at herself that she could think of Adrian Lyle without bitter wrath and indignation; that the fact of his absence to-day had been able to disturb her serenity and haunt her solitude.

Impetuously she turned away from the window at last, the flush still warm on her

cheek that had come with the humiliation of that thought—he does not care!

But would he always keep that serene indifference? Others had tried and failed when she had so willed. Why should this man be different? After all, he was but a man—of a nobler type, certainly, than most she had met; but she had read an ardent and imaginative nature in the flash and fire of the grand grey eyes; had fathomed the power of strong passions held in check by a strong nature, even under the perfect control and gentleness of that perfect manner.

For a moment her face grew warm; her eyes flashed like steel.

"If I could conquer him," she thought. "If I—could!"

It seemed a triumph worthy of all her efforts, stimulating even her languid energies. Would it be possible? She looked at herself and thought it would. But a vague sense of regret and impotence began to war with her usual self-confidence.

There was something base and cowardly in her resolve. She was not free, and he, if he ever cared, would not lightly forgive or extenuate treachery.

She seemed to see the blaze of wrath and scorn that would fill those speaking eyes; she seemed to see her petty vanities shrivel as before a scorching flame, when once he should read her purpose, and its petty end.

And yet its tempting allured and drew her on, and set the current of her thoughts to its turbulent flow. To be loved by him; to hold in her hands the misery of that grand and self-sufficient nature! For it would be only misery she would deal him—a cruel, incessant pain that should force him to remember her even against his will. The surest way to keep a man's memory was to make him unhappy. She had proved that again and again, and it seemed to her in this hour that no triumph would be so sweet as that which should wring from Adrian Lyle's lips the confession that, despite his strength and his reason, he loved the woman he now despised.

The task would not be easy, but therein lay its chief charm; something that would call forth her energies, her seductions, her thousand sorceries.

A little cruel smile crossed her lips; she caught its reflection in the glass on the opposite wall. "I am afraid I must be really wicked," she thought, as she looked back at that reflection. "My good moments are only vague regrets and vaguer

longings. What was it he said was to make me different? 'A great sorrow.' But a great sorrow can only spring from a great love; and where is there place or room for that—in a nature like mine!"

TEA TATTLE.

To the English the tea-table is typical of home. The mere mention of tea conjures up pictures of snug interiors, cosy firesides, familiar faces, and cheery chat. Its name is suggestive of all that is connected with sociability, and comfort, and ease. Moreover, it is a luxurious necessity—though that may sound paradoxical—to all classes. The charwoman, the washerwoman, the humblest cottier, each regards a cup of tea as the solace of a laborious life. To the middle classes "tea" is the meal for general family intercourse; whilst the ranks who form Society look forward to five o'clock—the hour dedicated to the consumption of this simple beverage—as the pleasantest and freest of the twenty-four.

But tea needs no new panegyric. It has been as highly eulogised as it has been severely denounced. Coffee, while it never has been and is never likely to become a national beverage, has also had its advocates and its opponents both before and since it took its place among the customary items of the domestic commissariat. To a certain extent, coffee has played a more important part in social life than tea; for the establishment of coffee-houses—the gossip-shops of our forefathers—is not to be passed over without due consideration.

And though coffee should claim priority of notice, inasmuch as it was known in this country some years earlier than tea, it is somehow to the latter that attention is first directed.

Tea, being a social beverage, the stimulant of fancy, and the promoter of pleasant gossip, suggests lighter thoughts than the mere consideration of dietetic qualities or the superiority of one blend to another. In the fragrant steam of a cup of tea, visions will arise of Mistress Pepys in new silken gown, of gay courtiers and painted ladies, stiff-skirted dames of the early Georgian era, and our short-waisted grandmothers, all of whom did their best, if the poets are to be credited, to prove the truth of a certain French proverb regarding absentees.

Dr. Johnson, in an essay on tea published in the "Literary Magazine," is of opinion

that it is unsuited to the lower classes, to whom, in its earlier days, it was totally unknown; it having been, as everybody knows, essentially a luxury, even so late as our great-grandmothers' days, when "company" tea was a guinea, and "family" tea not less than eight shillings a pound. The worthy doctor gives 1666 as the date of its introduction, it being, according to his account, brought by Earl Ossory and Earl Arlington from Holland, in which country their ladies learnt to brew it. But this is incorrect. The beverage was known in London as early as 1615, when it is mentioned in a letter written by Mr. Wickham, who calls it "chaw."

Pepys chronicles having sent for a cup of tea in 1660, "a China drink, whereof I have never before drunk;" and the advertisement column of the "Mercurius Politicus" for September 30, 1658, contains the following announcement: "That excellent, and by all physicians highly approved China drink, called by the Chineans 'tcha,' by other nations 'tay,' alias 'tee,' is sold at the Sultanness Head Coffee-house, in Sweeting's Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London." The founder of the house issued a broadsheet, still preserved in the British Museum, in praise of "the best of herbs, the Muses' friend."

"The quality is moderately hot," he says, "either for winter or summer. . . . The drink is declared to be most wholesome, preserving in perfect health until extreme old age. The particular virtues are these: It maketh the body active and lusty. It helpeth the headache, giddiness, and heaviness thereof. It removeth the obstructions of the spleen. It is very good against the stone and gravel. . . . It is good against lippitude distillations and cleareth the sight. It vanquisheth heavy dreams, laseth the brain, and strentheneth the memory. . . . And next the virtue and excellence of the leaf and drink is evident and manifest by the high esteem and use of it (of late years) by the physicians and knowing men in France, Italy, Holland, and other parts of Christendom; and in England it hath been sold in the leaf for six pounds, and sometimes for ten pounds the pound weight; and in respect of its former scarceness and dearth, it hath been only used as a regalia in high treatments and entertainments, and presents made thereof to princes and grandees till the year 1657." A year later, according to another publication, "Rugg's Diurnal," tea was sold in almost every

London street, and it had then become to be esteemed so highly that the East India Company offered two pounds for the acceptance of the King, whose Queen greatly helped to make "tcha"-drinking fashionable, and gave many a royal testimonial to the dealers. Referring to some blend of the fascinating plant, to which the royal lady had been pleased to give the "puff preliminary," Waller writes:

The best of herbs and best of queens we owe
To that bold nation which the way did shew
To the fair region where the sun does rise.

Amongst those who could afford to indulge in the new drink, the practice rapidly grew to excess, until in the time of Marie Thérèse, we find the Court physician attributing the increase of new diseases to the debility of constitution induced by constant tea-drinking. In 1678, its use had become so popular among the wealthy that it was freely indulged in after dinner, a custom much deplored in some quarters apparently, as Mr. Henry Saville, in a letter to his Uncle Coventry, speaks disparagingly of some friends who have fallen into "the base unworthy Indian practice" of quaffing "tcha" after dining. This custom speedily died out, however, more potent liquors being more to the taste of the fine old English gentleman. The opponents of the new fashion not only attacked it on the ground of its injurious properties, but railed against tea-drinking and tea parties generally as the promoters of many undesirable practices, carried on under the seemingly innocent pretext of mild conviviality. Scandal certainly seems to have been a too frequent adjunct of the Chinese drink; but it is open to discussion whether the fair ladies of other generations would not have made any assemblage an excuse for gossip. Perhaps the stimulating properties assigned to tea may have unduly excited the imagination, and thus encouraged a certain freedom of thought and looseness of tongue; though Dr. Johnson, an inveterate tea-drinker, whilst acknowledging it as an incentive to gossip, denies its stimulating effects. "Tea," he says, "neither exhilarates the heart nor stimulates the palate, it is commonly an entertainment merely nominal, a pretence for assembling to prattle, for interrupting business or diversifying idleness." On the other hand, the couplet,

Still, as their ebbing malice it supplies,
Some victim falls, some reputation dies,

decidedly favours the opinion put forth above. Whatever may have made scandal

an indispensable accompaniment of tea, it is to be feared that a great many ladies of past periods gave frequent opportunities to gossipmongers; but when accurate information failed, the imagination unfortunately supplied the required flavour to the Pekoe or Congou brewed on the occasion. Young is most bitter in his denunciation of tea-drinking:

Tea! how I tremble at thy fatal stream!
As Lethe dreadful to the love of fame.
What devastations on thy banks are seen!
What shades of mighty names that once have been!
A hecatomb of characters supplies
Thy painted altars' daily sacrifice

Besides being denounced on hygienic and moral grounds, it was also thought baneful from an economical point of view; and, considering the cost of each cup, there was some reason in this objection to its frequent and indiscriminate use. The paterfamilias of the Carolean or Georgian periods must have heard with much more uneasiness of a forthcoming tea-party than the husband of to-day. The less frivolous women of those periods exclaimed against tea quite as much as the men, and in a ladies' paper, "The Female Spectator," it is indignantly stated that the tea-table "costs more to support than would maintain two children at nurse; it is utter destruction of all economy, the bane of good housewifery, and the source of idleness."

As late as Southey's time, however, a great many women had never even heard of it, for the poet relates a story of a country lady to whom a town friend had sent a pound of tea as a handsome present. This worthy dame forthwith specially invited her friends to taste the new stuff, and duly served up to them the boiled leaves with the accompaniment of salt and pepper! It is further recorded that tea did not speedily become popular in that village. Those who did indulge in it were considered wildly extravagant by the opponents of all new fashions; and, in "The World" of 1753, it is deplored that an otherwise model country Rector is not able to forbid the use of this luxury to his town-bred wife. "However," it proceeds to say, "they seldom offer it but to the best company, and less than a pound will last them a twelvemonth."

Somewhat earlier than this, Dr. Salmon, in his "Family Dictionary," strongly recommends "thee" as an excellent and healthy drink, though he avers that "English thee, which is only sloe-leaves, gathered in May whilst they are young,"

is preferable to "Indian thee." To come nearer to our own times, it will be found that, in spite of its universal use in enormous quantities, the prejudice against tea by no means died out. Cobbett vehemently abuses it in his "Cottage Economy." Tea, according to his view, is "a debaucher of youth and a maker of misery for old age," and fifteen bushels of malt are worth "seven hundred and thirty tea messes;" while immoderate tea-drinking is even now a favourite theme for medical writers; and quite recently a distinguished cleric, at a meeting held for the purpose of discussing the furtherance of practical cookery in elementary schools, stated that "inordinate tea-drinking creates a generation of nervous, discontented people, for ever complaining of the existing order of the universe, scolding their neighbours, and sighing after the impossible." This is a view which may or may not be accepted. The Australians are certainly not good examples of this theory, for they are energetic folk, good citizens, peaceful neighbours, and yet tea is drunk to an enormous extent in the colony, and even the bushmen carry a supply constantly with them. In Russia, it is also a great institution, among the upper classes especially, who make the brewing of tea a study. That used is the "caravan" tea, brought overland, and, consequently, much dearer and better than our importations. It is brewed in the native "samovar," an urn kept perpetually hot by live coals, and is drunk, not with milk and sugar, as in this and other countries, but with a judicious mixture of lemon, which adds in a considerable degree to its flavour.

Whatever may be the effects of tea-drinking—a question best settled by the doctors, if they could agree on the point—it is an indisputable fact that its consumption in this country annually increases; and though there be those who virulently denounce it as a household poison, undoubtedly the majority will be in its favour, and a complete revolution of men and manners will have to take place before the social and cheering cup is banished from our midst.

BONES.

WHAT becomes of the bones? Every paterfamilias will at once reply, "into the ash-pit, or to the rag and bone man," and every good housekeeper will at once refer

you to the peripatetic tradesman. Most of us, however, never think at all about the matter; the bones go somewhere or other out of sight, and there is an end of them.

But the man with the barrow or donkey cart does not buy or exchange them for the love of the thing; on the contrary, we have the best reason in the world for asserting that he buys for the love of money; in fact, to sell them again, and make something by the transaction. Sooner or later, it is evident that he will want to get rid of his collection, and the question is then, where is his market? The answer to that is very simple; he takes them to the manure works. Bones are manure, then? Yes, and a very good one, either just as they leave the house, or after undergoing a treatment presently to be described. There are few manures which answer better, especially on pasture lands, and thousands of tons are used every year for this purpose.

It may be said that everybody knows this. A good many people do, I grant it, in a general way, just as we know that it will be hot this summer, without knowing why. But a very great many, including not a few farmers, do not know or will not believe it, and will shake their heads incredulously with the wide-awake look which we all know to mean, "Tell that to the marines." To these I can only repeat the assertion and give proofs, practical and scientific, so as to suit both classes of inquirers. One thing at any rate is certain; bones are very extensively sold for manure. The trade is a large one, giving employment to thousands of hands, and a very great deal of capital. And here I may observe that it is not a trade to be entered into lightly; farmers are the buyers, they are not rich and they take long credit; it is not here a case of the nimble ninepence, but rather of the slow shilling, not to say half-crown.

After all, it is not surprising that there should be some incredulity, even yet, as to the value of bone as a manure. For the best of us it is a knowledge of comparatively recent date; one of the numerous triumphs of this century, and by no means the least. I have taken some trouble in studying the literature of the question, and can find nothing before 1828, in which year the Doncaster Agricultural Society resolved to inquire into the subject, evidently of recent origin, and to that end printed and sent out extensively a number of questions. Answers were received in great numbers, and were submitted to the Council, who

deliberated long over them, and finally issued a Report in the form of a pamphlet in 1834. From this it appears that bones seem to have been used on an average only about twenty years; only one reply going back beyond forty years. Colonel St. Leger was the first known to use them in 1775; another experiment was made in 1794, but progress was very slow, from the practice of laying them on unbroken and in very large quantities; and it was not till fifteen years ago that they attracted general attention. Naturally, the question would be little more than local for a considerable time. It is curious to see why it should be so, and how merely geographical considerations should have an extraordinary bearing on the point. Now we know that Doncaster is the centre of a large and important agricultural district, but at first sight there appears no particular reason why it should appear in the van of progress, rather than Gloucester, or Shrewsbury, or Hereford, or Durham, or Carlisle. Yet there must be some sufficient reason, and here it is. Doncaster is no great distance from Sheffield, towards which every market day would slowly crawl hundreds of carts laden with produce to be deposited there, and thence to return, not empty of course, but filled with everything that might be wanted on the farm, the chief of which would naturally be manure. Now Sheffield is the head-quarters of the cutlery trade, which annually uses up an enormous weight of bone for handles, the sawings, clippings, and refuse of which would be ever accumulating, be a great deal of nuisance, get thrown on the rubbish-heap and be carted away with the rest. Such was the actual state of affairs; the cutlers were only too glad to give it for the trouble of carting. This went on for an indefinite period, till some farmer, more wide-awake or more lucky than the rest, noticed that where the bone was laid, better crops were the result; he would talk it over with his neighbour, most of whom would laugh at him; an odd one or two would, however, try for themselves, would find his conclusions confirmed, and act upon them for the future. In course of time—nobody knows how long it took—these farmers would take all they could get for nothing, and then begin to ask specially for it. Thereupon the cutlers would begin to smell a rat, and ask for payment, which they would get, and then in course of time, bone would get to be an article known to be wanted, and consequently to have a certain commercial

value. This explains, then, how it is that the manurial value of bone was first acknowledged in Yorkshire, whilst unknown elsewhere. It need not surprise anyone that the question of value as manure would be hotly contested, and that sceptics would be many. At that time, farmers were much more conservative than now, and much less educated; newspapers and magazines devoted to their interests were hardly known and little read; information travelled very slowly, and the farmer's horizon extended no further than his market town; and "what was good enough for my father is good enough for me," was then the regular commonplace in the mouth of the agriculturist. There would be many—a large majority, in fact—who would consider spending money on bones to be tantamount to throwing it into the ditch.

But a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and there were, it is plain, a fair number of farmers who were disposed to try new-fangled things. The Report of the Doncaster Agricultural Society confirms on the whole the favourable opinions which had found more or less expression amongst intelligent agriculturists. Bones had proved to be of considerable value on dry sands, limestone, chalk, light loams, and peat; on grass, arable lands for fallow, for turnips, or any subsequent crop. As an appendix are added some "Practical Remarks on Bones as Manure, from 1827 to 1832," by the factor to Sir Evan M. Murray MacGregor, from which it appears that bones did not get into Perthshire till 1827, and were then laughed at till the crop appeared, when forty-five tons were ordered by farmers for the turnips of 1828.

The Doncaster Report attracted much attention in the agricultural world, as the first authoritative statement on the question, and produced, in 1836, a pamphlet on the "Use of Crushed Bones as Manure," by Cuthbert W. Johnson, who, writing from Great Totham, Essex, asserts that they are better than the best stable manure, that the consumption has steadily increased, and would be greater, but for the fact that farmers as a class would not believe them to be manure.

Writing after this long interval of time, and still every now and then meeting with people who are yet of the same mind, it is not difficult to realise that a great deal of prejudice would have to be overcome before this new-fangled article could take the place to which it is justly entitled. A piece

of bone lying on a field does indeed look a most unpromising object in the way of manure; about as valuable, in fact, as a piece of wood. It looks as if it had not been altered for years. It does not crumble when we pick it up, but seems perfectly solid, just as we have always known it. We all know farm-yard manure and liquid manure, and have seen guano and powdery manures spread on land, and we think we can see that they may and will be of use to the future crop; but the idea of pieces of bone doing good does not commend itself at first to our intelligence. There seems to be no reason why a hard substance like this should possess valuable characteristics. We can only take in the assurance on trust, that, after the application of so much per acre, the crop was very superior to what had been produced before, and this, no doubt, was the way in which knowledge got spread.

Nowadays, there is no difficulty in explaining the matter. Any chemist can tell you why bones are a good and lasting manure. But, though a knowledge of this science is widely spread, yet even now farmers, as a rule, do not go in for science; and, forty or fifty years ago we may safely say that it was utterly unknown to them. In fact, the whole subject was practically unknown to the world till the famous Liebig, about 1840, devoted his attention to the Chemistry of Agriculture. Since that date great progress has been made, and no one can take up a paper devoted to the agricultural interest, without being at once impressed by the fact that farming, in the highest sense of the term, is a profoundly scientific business.

The value of bones arises from the fact that they contain a very large proportion of an element which is found more or less in all crops, and especially in the seeds of the cereals—this is phosphorus, combined with oxygen and lime to form phosphate of lime. This latter compound, then, whether in the shape of bone or of natural rock, is the source of phosphorus, which is, perhaps, better known to us as the substance of which the principal and practically the only use is in the manufacture of matches. It is that peculiar article which anybody who has attended lectures on chemistry must have seen—a dirty yellowish-brownish looking substance, which has always to be kept in water, and is only to be handled, and for a short time only, with wet fingers. With this article we have nothing to do directly; our interest lies in its compound—phosphate of lime.

This compound is widely distributed. It forms a small percentage of all fertile soils, and appears to be derived from the ancient unstratified rocks, which came into being nobody knows when. Sir Wm. Thomson will say some twenty million years ago, Mr. Crookes wants some millions of millions; but both agree that it is a long time ago. We will skip this period, and merely observe that this rock, in the course of ages, crumbled down and formed a portion of the mineral constituents of the soil. Plants grew, and took it up chiefly in the seeds; these seeds form a large portion of the food of animals, including man. The phosphate of lime is thus absorbed into the system, part is retained and stored up in the shape of bone, part is continually passing away in the excrements, and thus the round goes on for ever and ever. The phosphate of lime, then, voided by our cattle, we know is returned to the soil in the shape of farm-yard manure, and it is only carrying the principle a little further to return the same constituent in a much more concentrated form in the shape of bones.

Bones, in fact, contain some sixty per cent. of phosphates, the rest being made up of nitrogenous matters and a certain proportion of water. The nitrogenous matter is of itself a valuable manure, and on that account, raw bone, just as it comes from the animal, is frequently applied to the land. It lasts longer, as the saying is, which, translated scientifically, means that it decomposes more slowly, the nitrogenous substances preventing mechanically the influence of the air and the acids always present in the soil. It is a well-known saying that raw bones are a landlord's, and boiled bones a tenant's, manure; and it is commonly understood that while the latter are good for four years, the former will last eight years. And this brings us back to our original theme, "What becomes of the bones?" We have already seen that they find their way to the manure works, and we can now follow them in their progress to the fields.

Let us suppose that a bone-collector has finished his daily round, and has got enough to make it worth his while to get rid of it. He goes to the manure works, and finds half-a-dozen others like-minded with himself to convert their stock into cash. When his turn comes, his lot is turned over and inspected very thoroughly, for somehow or other, bones collected from house to house seem to

have a great attraction for pieces of old iron, old bricks, paving-stones, and other unconsidered trifles, which are very heavy, and yet perfectly valueless to the manure maker. Having passed this ordeal, the lot is weighed and promptly paid for in the usual way, for, as may be imagined, in this trade there is no question of monthly accounts; no, the terms are strictly "cash on delivery."

But while this has been going on, there come up three or four carts full to overflowing with raw bones from the butchers, all the heads of oxen being symmetrically packed on the top, teeth upwards, a ghastly sight to the uninitiated, but nothing when you are used to it; in fact, if we want never to see anything but what is nice, one's movements would be very much circumscribed. Yet even here, this unpleasant raw material shows us that a love of the beautiful, an æsthetic feeling, is not extinguished, but still exists in the bosom of the prosaic butcher, or why this studied attention to external appearance in the commonplace packing in a cart?

Another cart will have two or three still more ghastly objects projecting above the sides, namely, the carcasses of dead horses, which are brought here from the horse slaughterer's. We all know dimly that there is a trade so-called, but few people are aware what becomes of a horse when it has been sent to the knacker's. The flesh is cut off, boiled, converted thus into cat's-meat, and sent to London, that enormous market for all sorts of queer things. If people only knew the extent of this cat's-meat trade, they would be astonished. As to the bones, we see where they find their way to.

Suppose all the barrows, donkey and horse carts emptied of their contents, we can now follow the bones leisurely. They are all taken and thrown on the heap, already large, lying alongside the bone-mill. This is simply two rollers with sharp steel teeth revolving slowly by steam power, and fed by an endless band travelling in an inclined plane towards them. On this the small bones are thrown with a spade, the bigger ones by hand—shanks, thighs, heads, ribs—and everything finds its way to the space between the rollers, and there, as may easily be imagined, something has to give way, and needless to say in this case it is not the steel teeth. The bones thus roughly broken fall down into a wheelbarrow placed beneath, which when full is at once

wheeled up a plank to the top of the boiling-pan, into which it is emptied and brought back again to the mill, and so on till the pan is filled. Now let us see what is going to be done to the bones.

What does the careful housewife do with the bones, let us say with the remains of the piece of ribs which was finished to-day? She breaks them up, puts them in a pan with water and heats it; very soon some fat comes out, which is skimmed off; the pan is restored to the fire, and then the goodness, as it is called, comes out, and this, flavoured in all sorts of ways, serves as soup, or as a foundation for soup. This is exactly the process pursued in the bone works; only, instead of the ordinary kitchen pan, the boiling vessel is of enormous size, holding up to as much as ten tons, and, instead of the fire, the heat is applied in the form of high-pressure steam. Under the influence of this powerful agent, the fat soon appears; is run off by well-known appliances; and becomes a merchantable article known as bone grease, bone fat, or bone tallow, and is used for all the purposes to which tallow is devoted: soap-making, candle-making, or lubricating machinery. The steam is still kept on, and in the course of time the gelatine makes its appearance—the goodness, as it is called in the home circle. At the proper moment, dictated by appearance, this is run off into large iron tanks; a black, thick, viscous, strong-smelling substance, which is now known as glue size, or soft glue, and which, at various strengths or densities, is largely used by dyers, finishers, and calico printers in the preparation of textile fabrics, such as cotton prints, mole-skins, cords, fustians, velveteens, and so on. Boiled down still further to expel more water, and then sliced with a sharp knife and hung on string in a current of dry air, we arrive at the well-known “hard glue,” which everybody knows, and which, by-the-by, is the only glue known to the world at large outside the special trades which use the “soft” article.

Now what remains in the pan? Nothing but bone, pure unadulterated phosphate of lime, with a small percentage of the phosphates of potash and magnesia. Nothing further is to be got out of it, everything has been utilised; it only needs to be further crushed, to meet the requirements of the market, into half-inch or quarter-inch bones, or still further, into what is known as bone meal, and then it is ready to be carried on to the field, to undergo

the alternations of heat and cold, of day and night, and to come under all those influences which are briefly comprehended in the term “weathering.” Under these circumstances the phosphate of lime is carried into the soil, is taken up by the crop, which in time finds its way to man and the lower animals, and the same process is repeated over and over again.

Bones, we may as well say, enter also more or less into the composition of many artificial manures, which are specially adapted for certain crops, and which are made by the trade according to the dictates of experience and science. One has only to look over the advertising columns of an agricultural paper, to find that the farmer can be supplied with special manures for wheat, oats, turnips, potatoes, and, in fact, any crop known in England. The same remark holds good for foreign crops, of which we need only mention sugar-beet, sugar-cane, cotton, and tobacco, for whose nourishment between one and two hundred thousand tons are annually shipped from British ports.

The business of the British Kingdom being, generally speaking, to receive raw material from all parts of the world, to work it up into a merchantable article, and then to return it to its place of origin, it need surprise no one to find that bones are no exception to the general rule. As a matter of fact, our imports for 1885 amounted to no fewer than sixty-four thousand three hundred and eighty-seven tons, of the value of three hundred and fifty-seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-one pounds. This is exclusive of bones applicable for manufacturing purposes, such as buttons, knife-handles, etc., of which the weight for 1885 was nine thousand four hundred and thirty-six tons, valued at seventy-nine thousand four hundred and ninety-six pounds.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

ORKNEY, SHETLAND, AND THE ISLES.

IN most maps of the British Isles the Shetlands occupy a corner to themselves, as if they were just tacked on to the Orkneys, but otherwise placed for convenience of reference; and perhaps this custom of the map-makers is a cause why people fail to realise how far distant the islands are from the nearest point of the Scottish mainland. A hundred miles or

so of stormy seas divide the extreme northern point of Scotland from the important archipelago which seems to bring the British Isles within speaking distance of the Arctic Circle. Not that the Shetlands are distinguished by Arctic severity of climate. The winters are generally mild and soft; snow rarely lingers on the hills; although when the Frost King once obtains the mastery over the softening influence of the Gulf Stream, he does not fail to show by his grip that he feels that here is a realm that should be his own, according to parallels of latitude.

Some ninety islands and ialets stud the ocean in this archipelago, but of these only twenty-five are inhabited. There are desert islands by the score, and yet not desert in the sense of barrenness, for they are, many of them, green with rich, succulent herbage, and afford pasture for sheep and cattle, which are tended by shepherds and herdsmen of the ocean; amphibious beings who are as much at home in a stormy tideway as upon the quiet moorland pastures of the mainland of Heth.

Heth, or Zet, or Shetland, bears in its name the secret of the origin of its people. It is as much Norway as Scotland, and if it were ever Pict-land, as tradition indicates, the traces of its earlier inhabitants in the names and manners of the islands are few and far between. Something of an earlier civilisation, of a more primitive Christianity, is indeed revealed in the names of sundry islands, the Papa-Stour and others, which suggest the former influence of the Celtic Church, whose Papæ or abbots once probably ruled the isles with mild and paternal sway. Then came the fierce Northmen, with their simple and homely forms of rule and government, and the rude rites of the worship of Odin, which took the place of the religion and civilisation of the Picts. Still the missionaries of the Irish Church found their way among the heathen, and there are traces of the influence of the fathers of the Columban Church as late as the eleventh century. But the islanders clung strongly to their old faith, and they owed their conversion to Christianity rather to their attachment to their chiefs, whom they determined to follow even through such unknown and dangerous paths, than to any spiritual enlightenment.

The flood of Northern invasion passed from Shetland to the Orkneys, from the Orkneys to Caithness and Sutherland, and spread itself over the Hebrides and Western

Iales. Always it was strictly limited by the hills. Where the Northman's ships could float, there he was lord and master. But the gloomy passes of the mountains inspired him with awe and aversion, nor had the simple pastoral life and hard fare of the hills any charm for him. Now, as the Gael has no real love for the sea, nor for the life of fisherman and sailor, the two races managed to exist together, and in course of time became pretty well amalgamated, that is as far as the Western Isles are concerned, and the new-comers gradually became even more Gaelic than the Gaels themselves. This transformation did not, however, take place in the Shetlands or Orkneys, which had been pretty well cleared of their Celtic population in the first outburst of the Scandinavian flood.

Thus Shetland has everywhere traces of the Northern origin of its people. Its lands are measured, not by acres, rods, and poles, but by the merk, an area of indefinite extent, larger or smaller it seems, according to the original quality of the land, but roughly classified as sixpenny, ninepenny, and twelpenny land. The headman of the district was formerly known as the Foud, and his jurisdiction was called the Foudrie. The chief seat of the Foud was in Tingwall, and upon a small holm in the loch of Tingwall the assize for the islands was held. Not far distant was the Tarpeian Rock, from which criminals were hurled by the ready hands of the community at large. But when Shetland came under the dominion of the Scottish Kings, the Court and seat of jurisdiction were removed to Scalloway, where Patrick, Earl Stewart, built a strong castle, A.D. 1600, the great Tower of Scalloway, now a shapeless ruin.

At Scalloway nearly all the gentry of the island had their town houses, and met each year in an informal kind of Parliament, the "Thing" of the ancient jurisdiction. This Court or Parliament, which was at once judicial and legislative, was anciently composed of the udallers or landowners, all lands having formerly been held by free or udal tenure. But in 1470 Shetland was pledged to the Scottish Crown, and an era began known in the annals of the isles as the oppression of the Lords. Shetland was granted to Lord Robert Stuart, the natural son of James the Fifth, and his descendant James. The builder of the Tower of Scalloway made himself so hateful by his cruelties and oppression, that his execution, in the year 1614, for

alleged high treason, was hailed with universal joy.

The Shetlanders have always been distinguished for their strong attachment to their ancient religious observances. They clung to the worship of Odin, and ate horse-flesh in his honour long after the islands were nominally Christianised. The King of Norway, after his father's defeat and death at Stamford Bridge, remained five years in Shetland, and zealously laboured to put its ecclesiastical affairs in a satisfactory condition. In conjunction with the Archbishop of Bremen, the Metropolitan of the Isles, he established nine or more bishoprics, the holders of which had no more extensive jurisdiction than the present pariah ministers of the Scottish Church. The Isles were then richer, perhaps, in flocks and herds than at present, for the sole right of trading with the Isles, which the King assigned to the merchants of Bergen, was then deemed a valuable privilege, while the Archbishop of Bremen alone, in virtue of his office, was authorised to import three hundred and sixty hundredweight of wool from the Isles.

As well as in wool, the islanders were very rich in butter and oil, which formed the circulating medium in which they paid scatt and wattles, the original taxes of the island. Feus, too, were, at a later period, paid in butter, and landmails or rents were paid in woodmail, which was a certain quantity of cloth, for the weaving of which the islanders had long been famous. In these transactions the islanders employed their own weights and measures. The merk was used instead of the pound, and was equivalent to a pound and a quarter or a pound and a half, and twenty-four merks made one lispund, which was the general unit for commercial transactions. The weighing-machine of the island was a primitive steelyard; in this case a wooden beam, thick at one end and tapering to the other, and supported by a cord called the snarl, the weight in merks and lispunds being marked with pegs along the beam.

The harvest of the sea, too, was ever bounteous; the neighbouring waters abound in fish, and the Shetlanders have always been bold and hardy fishermen. Lands were often held by a fishing tenure, and the customs and epochs of the fishing season were modified by the demands of the labour of the fields. During the summer, the fishermen in a body resorted to some suitable shore where there was

space to dry their nets, and salt and cure the fish that were caught, and here they set up their tents or booths and made a temporary fishing town. The one great holiday of the fishermen was Johnsmas, 24th of June (Old Style), which they made a point of spending ashore in mirth and jollity. At Lammas they struck their tents and made for home. But first they feasted and made merry again, at what was called the Fisherman's foy. There was a favourite toast repeated over and over again, or rather it might be called a prayer, that seems to embody the dual life of these hardy crofters and fishermen: "Lord! open the mouth of the grey fish, and hold thy hand aboon the corn!"

The folk-lore and superstitions of this tenacious race is worth collecting; for although the ancient beliefs are fast vanishing under modern influences, they have lingered longer than elsewhere. Not long since the cotter bewailed his cows, elfshot by fairy bolts, and refusing their milk to the pail. The neagle or water kelpie haunted the burns and streams, and was especially dangerous to millers, whom he would entice to a fatal ride in the guise of a beautiful sheltie, all ready bridled and saddled. The witches of Shetland were long a terror to those who voyaged that way, as they could raise storms and tempests, and would do it too from mere wantonness of mischief when a strange sail appeared in sight. A legacy from the witches was the wrestling thread, spun from the wool of a black goat or sheep, with its nine knots—a talisman not unknown either on the Borders, as in the ballad of Willie's Ladye:

Oh, wha has loosed the nine witch locks
That were among that ladyes locks?

But the witch knot of to-day is employed for more beneficent purposes than the undoing of fair ladyes. It is a sovereign remedy for sprains and hurts, accompanied by the muttered formula:

Set joint to joint,
Bone to bone,
And sinew to sinew.

A curious instance, too, of the survival of old practices occurs at Weesdale, where stands an old ruined chapel dedicated to Our Lady, still secretly frequented by the islanders, at any rate as lately as the middle of the present century. The practice was to cast in an offering of money before the deserted shrine, in order to secure success in some enterprise or expedition. A cannie elder of the kirk was reputed

to have been in the habit of collecting these offerings at various times and placing them in the parish poor-box; but none of the neighbouring population would have dared to touch such a sacred deposit. About this same church of Weesdale, too, occurs the familiar legend of the two sisters, who so far eased the labours of the masons, that these found every morning enough stone ready quarried and dressed for the work of the day.

Another strange survival was the faith of the people in the royal touch for the King's evil. Scrofulous complaints are unhappily frequent, while the advent of a royal personage at Shetland is necessarily a rare event. There may be a doubt, too, whether the mysterious gift is inherited by the present Royal Family, who have never claimed to exercise it. But crowns and half-crowns of the first Charles were current in the island within the last thirty or forty years, a touch from which was supposed to be thoroughly efficacious, and the process was well known as the "Cure by the coin."

The chief mainland of the isles bears the name of Pomona. Whether a fancy name bestowed by some chieftain or bishop, who had not lost his Latin, or with some derivation from the Norse, does not appear. Anyhow, the country is not adapted for orchards. The islands generally are bare of trees, although the tradition is that there were forests once that covered the bleak hill-sides, and trunks of trees are found among the peat mosses. But the chief mainland valley of Quarff is pleasing enough; a simple moorland valley, with pastures here and there, and sheltered nooks for houses, and opening upon a pleasant bay. With this morsel of continent, six islands go to make up the parish. Among these are Bressa, dark and gloomy, with its headlands, caves, and strangely-shaped rocks; and Noss, with its eastern headland called the Noop. The Noop of Noss is a great station for migrating birds, a half-way house to the breeding grounds on the solitary Arctic shores, and in the season of flight it is covered with birds of many different species, whose cries are described as resembling the most deafening of waterfalls. There is the Holm of Noss, too, a perpendicular rock with pasture for a dozen sheep, separated from the main island by a terrible chasm, deep, but so narrow that a flying bridge of ropes with a cradle attached is thrown across.

Separated from the mainland by a sound

full of islets and rocks, is the Island of Yell, full of relics of an ancient population, which was much more dense, it would seem, than at the present day. There are tumuli, ancient forts, and cemeteries, where traces of cremation may be found, with funeral urns and other relics. There is a reputed Roman camp, too, at Snawburgh, although no Roman antiquities appear to support the claim; and it would be something of a surprise to archaeologists to find traces of Roman occupation so far north. The ancient occupation of weaving cloth is still carried on in this island, and, with fishing, farming, and mason work, the Yellanders manage to live and thrive.

Beyond lies Unst, surrounded by roaring tides and terrible races, where even in moderate weather navigation is very dangerous. The island is dry and level for the most part; but on the western side rises the height of Valleyfield, sloping gently towards the Atlantic, and then breaking off in tremendous precipices. The hill is seven hundred feet high, and yet, in stormy weather, the spray from the wild Atlantic breakers sweeps over the top, and gives the herbage of the valley a distinct character. The hill breaks off to the north in the headland of Hermanness, called after some Norse hero, and this is the extreme north point of Great Britain. The island, though generally bleak and bare, affords pasturage to numbers of those small and hardy ponies that are known as Shelties, or Shetlanders.

Around the island of Unst is a continuous chain of round towers, known as Picts' houses. Each of these towers is within sight of another, and they are generally perched upon islets or headlands; and when upon the level ground they are protected by several concentric moats. There is little reason to doubt the traditional account of their origin. The men of Orkney and Shetland have no doubt, at all events, of the former existence of the Picts, or Pechts.

Stephenson, the engineer, relates how it was reported to him once by the islanders that they had caught a Pecht, and it seems that they seriously contemplated putting an end to him, "more majorum." The Pecht turned out to be an inoffensive civil engineer of antiquarian pursuits, but very small in stature and dark in complexion.

Another curious feature among the antiquities of the Shetlands generally is the great number of small chapels—reputed Roman Catholic—mostly in complete ruin. It seems more likely that these were origi-

nally the cells of the early Celtic cenobites, than that the Scandinavian population were ever so devoted to religious practices as to build all those chapels.

Compared with the distant Shetlands, the Orkney Isles seem quite homelike, with only a dozen miles of firth between them and the Isle of Britain, although that Pentland Firth is as stormy a morsel of sea as can be well imagined. In rough weather the rude Atlantic surges come sweeping through the strait with a force and fury quite terrific. The power of these waves, sweeping along over thousands of miles of wild ocean, and dashing against the rocky barrier of the isles, may be judged from the fact that, in 1862, during a severe storm, the sea swept over the cliffs of the Isle of Stromo, two hundred feet in height, and washed over the island in torrents.

The Orkneys are hardly so thoroughly Norse as the Shetlands; the Celtic population probably was not so thoroughly cleared out of them, for they were conquered at a later period, and they have experienced a certain reflux of Gaelic influences from the mainland. But the islands are quite Norse enough; the language of old Norgê was spoken up to the middle of last century; and it has been superseded by English, and not by Gaelic. The islanders, indeed, speak English with a peculiar accent which varies with the various isles to which they belong; and they use the "thou" and "thee," like the natives of Yorkshire or Lancashire, or the people called Quakers.

From the date of the conquest of the Orcades by Harold Harfager, A.D. 876, down to the fifteenth century, Orkney was held by a long line of thirty Scandinavian Earls, mighty potentates in their way, great pirates and plunderers, and holding themselves even with the royalties of their day. The line ended in a female, who brought the proud title to her husband, the Earl of Strathairn. The Earldom was then by a curious arrangement made to descend to the children of Lord Strathairn, the St. Clairs:

Holding princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay.

The St. Clairs held their title at first under the King of Norway; but in 1468, the suzerainty of both Orkney and Shetland was transferred to the King of Scotland, or rather it was mortgaged to King James the Third, as security for his wife's portion, that wife being Margaret, Princess of Denmark. The portion was never paid in any other form, and the Scotch Kings and

their successors remained, and still remain, in possession. But it has been questioned whether what lawyers call the equity of redemption has ever been extinguished, so that if the original mortgage were tendered to the British Crown, there might be a case for restitution that would put the affair of Alsace and Lorraine altogether in the shade.

Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, contains some interesting relics of the Northmen. Chief among these is the cathedral of Saint Magnus, a building containing many curious Romanesque features, which was founded by Ronald, Earl of Orkney, A.D. 1138, in memory of his uncle Magnus, who, after his death, was canonised for his piety and his beneficence towards the Church. This saint has a certain interest for Londoners, as several churches dedicated to the same saint existed in and about the City, the foundation of which is generally attributed to Danish colonists. The ruins of the Bishops' palace, too, are of considerable interest. Here the Kings of Norway have been entertained, and one of them—Haco—died within the walls, after his defeat at the battle of Larga. The Earls' palace, which closely adjoins the Bishops', is a much more modern building, having been built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, early in the seventeenth century.

The Sinclairs, it must be noted, had been induced to exchange the Earldom of Orkney for other lordships and possessions on the mainland, and the Earldom was then settled upon the Crown. It was granted by James the Fifth to his natural son, and from that time the Stewarts ruled in Orkney till, in the year 1756, Earl Morton sold out all his possessions in the islands to Sir Lawrence Dundas—afterwards ennobled as Earl of Zetland—and the Earls of Zetland are still the chief proprietors of the Orcades.

The history of the Hebrides or Western Isles is closely connected with the Orkneys and Shetland. The same Scandinavian invasion brought them under the dominion of the Norwegian Crown; but the nationality of the Norwegians proved too strong for the intrusive element, and in the thirteenth century the Western Isles became once more, nominally at least, a part of the Kingdom of Scotland. But the Lord of the Isles long kept up a semi-royal authority, often in direct antagonism to the King of Scotland.

The chief seat of the powerful Lord of the Isles was in green Islay, where an isle

within an isle forms a natural stronghold three acres in extent. Here rested the sacred stone on which each new Lord performed the ceremonies of his initiation, clad in a white robe, with a white rod in his hand, and a sword, each symbolical of his various attributes as chief ruler. Bishops and priests hallowed the ceremony, and a grand mass was celebrated on the occasion. Then followed a week or more of feasting and drinking, in which all the chiefs of the isles took part, and when the bards and musicians, who attended in crowds, were treated with lavish hospitality.

The last of the Lords died a prisoner and a monk in Paisley Abbey. But isolated in their strong castles, and rarely troubled with interference from the Crown, the island chiefs long kept up a rude independence. Such an one was Maclean of Duart, who is the subject of so many stories and legends, that it may be inferred that his personality made a strong impression upon the people of his time. Maclean allied himself with the Spaniards of the Armada, who had taken refuge in the ship "Florida," in Tobermory Bay, within his own dominions so to say, and he availed himself of the skilled artillerymen of the crew to knock about the castles of his enemies. Tradition credits him, too, with an amour with a beautiful Spanish lady, for whose sake he deserted his wife, a member of the powerful Campbell family. In revenge the wife blew up the "Florida"—there is no doubt as to the blowing up—and there may be a germ of fact in the rest of the story. Luckily most of the crew were away on an expedition with Maclean at the time. Lachlan cruelly revenged himself upon his wife by placing her upon an isolated rock in the Sound of Mull, to be swept away by the tide; and the rock is there to testify to this day. But the lady was rescued, like Bluebeard's wife, by her brothers; and the legend goes on to tell how Lachlan himself was subsequently slain in Edinburgh High-street by his wife's indignant kinsmen. Another account has it that he fell in battle with the Macdonalds, on the shore of Loch Grinneard, in Islay.

Anyhow, the chief was killed, and had a grand funeral, no doubt, and was carried in much state with galleys and banners to the sepulchre of his ancestors in old Iona.

As for Iona itself, the Isle of Columba and the cradle of Christianity in the west, volumes have been written of its history and associations, which can only be barely

alluded to here. Nor can we say much about the outer isles, Lewis, described as a peat turf set in the Atlantic, and Harris, part of the same island but belonging to a different county. Indeed, the way in which the Western Isles have been parcelled out among counties with which they have no connection, either morally or topographically, suggests that here was originally the policy of dividing and splitting up the fellowship of the isles that they might be more at the mercy of friends on the mainland.

And lastly we must not disregard the poet's adjuration:

But oh, o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,
On whose bleak rocks which brave the wasting tides,
Fair Nature's daughter virtue yet abides.

Most remote and lonely of all our dependencies, indeed, is St. Kilda, cut off by sixty miles of stormy sea from its nearest island neighbour. And so they exist, without luxuries, without post-offices, or newspapers, a simple, frugal race, who spin and weave, and capture the sea birds on the face of the stupendous cliffs, hanging by ropes over the most frightful precipices. Certain peculiar conditions attach to their lonely lives: first, a strange mortality among their infants, so that the population is actually decreasing, and children are looked upon as a precious and rare gift, although the race is distinguished for fecundity. Again, there is the boat cough, a species of influenza, which attacks all the natives of the isle whenever it is visited by strangers. But on the whole they are a strong and healthy race, and those who survive the strange malady of infancy, which carries off six out of seven newly-born infants, are rarely troubled with any of the ills of flesh.

CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH.

THE English language is forcible in its expletives. To those possessed of a ready flow of words, its vocabulary of vituperation would seem to be extensive. English, indeed, has not unfitly been termed "the swearing language," though it may incidentally be remarked that we cannot exactly be said to enjoy a monopoly in this respect. The English of everyday use may possess these among many other manifest advantages, but it is impossible for the warmest supporter of his country's ways to deny that, in some respects, our

language is deficient. Not that, in the long run, it is found impossible by its aid to convey any desired meaning; but it would seem to be wanting in exact equivalents to certain of those concise and expressive little forms of common courtesy, which in foreign tongues convey so much, as it were, in a nutshell. True, it may be urged, that all languages suffer from similar deficiencies. There are English words for which no exact equivalent is to be met with in other languages. It is characteristic of the cosmopolitan nature of modern existence that, unwilling as foreigners are to admit the superiority of outside—the Greeks would have termed them barbarian—modes of thought, words of exotic origin find their way slowly into daily use.

Thus Gallic neighbours have of late been largely anglicising their social vocabulary. The agreeable English custom of afternoon tea is so firmly established in certain Parisian circles, that it is considered thoroughly "chic" in high life to "five o'clock" after a "tour" in the Bois on a "breack" or a "four-in-hand" (pronounced, it should be observed, "foorinon"), or after the exertion of a little game of lawn-tennis (known as "laven-teneese") at which the "toilettes" of the "misses," and the "shakehands" between the "gentlemen" in "redingotes" (a corruption of our "riding-coats"), will be duly described by the "reporter" of the *Figaro* or the *Gil Blas*.

At all this farrago of Anglo-French and Franco-English words (each without its respective equivalent) we may smile; but on our side of the Channel we are guilty of much the same amiable weakness, though Englishmen would appear to be a little more sensitive as to the correct pronunciation of foreign words, wherever used. Our good old-fashioned Anglo-Saxon has only been kept abreast of modern progress by the process of thus introducing new words from foreign sources. Ours, it must be remembered, is the most modern of the European languages, unless that new monstrosity, "Volapuk," is to be reckoned as enjoying a recognised existence. Many words which are to all intents and purposes as John Bullish in their appearance as can be are of purely foreign, and comparatively speaking, modern origin.

A very hasty reference to the late Archbishop Trench's curious little work on English words will suffice to show how the successive incidents of our history, political

and social, have introduced new phrases into our language. Sir Walter Scott's ingenious explanation of the influence of the Normans on the domestic language of the kitchen has often been brought forward: how the ox, fed by the Anglo-Saxon serf, was known when served at the table of his Norman lord as "beef;" how the pig, tended by the Saxon swineherd, was the "pork" of the hall board; the calf, when dressed, became "veal;" and sheep, Frenchified into "mutton;" and so, since the days of the living contemporaries of Scott's ideal *Ivanhoe*, our tongue has had slowly added to it new words and new phrases, which in due course of time have been acknowledged as "English, quite English."

Of late years the pleasant French salutation of parting friends, "au revoir," for which there exists no satisfactory English equivalent—"good-bye 'till I see you again," is very roundabout—has been gradually creeping into use among us. Already, something of its original affectation seems passing away. The phrase, indeed, conveys a meaning which, to those who give any thought to such matters, is much less abrupt than the sturdy "good-bye," for which many persons will be found to express an open distaste. In the greeting of "au revoir"—the contraction of the longer phrase, "au plaisir de vous revoir"—there is a delicately transitional character, which stands in marked contrast to the shorter and more decisive "adieu," with the tones of which is associated the painful idea of possible eternal, at least, earthly separation. In English we have no transitional greeting such as is to be found in every European language: the "auf wieder sehen," of the German, the "a riverderci," of the Italian, exactly answering to the French "au revoir," for which our Parisian neighbours have several variations in the more familiar "à tantôt," "à bientôt," and so forth.

It is typical of that downright nature of our British character, on which we are so fond of dwelling, that our language is deficient in these delicate distinctions; and it is, perhaps, some might say, a sign that our natural sturdiness is being enfeebled, that we are admitting into daily conversation such new-fangled ideas, or "neologisms," as the grammarians would term them. Doubtless it is this feeling which accounts for the accusations of affectation which have always been levelled at those who endeavour to encroach on the insular self-sufficiency of our mother-tongue.

Every reader of Macaulay will remember how savagely that literary "brave" scalped poor Horace Walpole for his many Frenchified notions. But it must be remembered that, without such men as Walpole and their influence, our life would be very prosaic and unrefined. We owe to the experience gained by our nobility in their travels, during the once obligatory "grand tour," much, if not most of the artistic culture which exists in our country. Our very creature comforts would be but poorly attended to had not our ancestors introduced from abroad not only many of the delicacies, but the very necessities of our everyday existence.

English life, like our language, far more than the life and language of the modern French or Italian, bears evidence of constant modifications introduced by influences brought to bear on us from abroad. As an instance, we have not yet positively fixed our dinner-hour, which varies most puzzlingly; and as for the succession of courses, and the very elements which compose that most important of all meals, a degree of uncertainty exists in various sections of society, such as is unknown on the Continent. In this direction, foreign influences cannot be said to have been happy, for they have sadly disturbed many, if not most, of the excellent traditions of a past, which on this point at least was settled in its views.

It is impossible to deny that in the expression of delicate social distinctions, our language is in points deficient. How appropriate for instance is the use, common to every foreign tongue, of the endearing second person singular in addressing relatives or intimate friends. With us, "thou" and "thee" are now confined to the language of the conventional stage country-bumpkin, the poet, and the impressive commands of the decalogue. The Quaker's mode of address we, even they themselves, have come to regard as stiff. Yet what a singular deficiency it implies in our language—one not wanting in other respects in terms of endearment—that we should possess no middle course in the form with which we address our fathers and mothers, our sisters and brothers, our wives and children, or the stranger to whom we may have been introduced but a moment previously. At what period of our social history this came up it would be curious to determine, but the fact remains that ours is the one European language which is wanting in this graceful tribute to

affection and intimacy. It is only a further proof of the delicate shades of distinction attached to apparently simple forms of this nature, that the foreign use of "thou" may be made to mark quite as much the sense of superiority as of intimate equality. It is a relic doubtless of feudal tradition, if not indeed of the earlier classic times of slavery, that dependants abroad are usually addressed in the second person singular, a paternal form also adopted by elderly persons in speaking to children. As for the German distinctions of the proper use of "thou," "you," and "they," such rules are regulated by a code of etiquette, the strictness of which would find but scant favour with our blunt English nature.

Before leaving a subject which admits of considerable extension, it is worthy of note that in another feature our language, whatever its literary power, shows a deficiency from a social point of view, which is unknown to the languages of the Continent. The universal use and adaptability of the French title of courtesy, "Madame," common also to Germans, and the Italian "Signora," with their respective diminutives, "Mademoiselle," "Fräulein," and "Signorina," mark a distinction, the absence of a conversational equivalent to which is in our country, socially speaking, most inconvenient. Without an exact knowledge of a person's name, the most polite of Englishmen is left without any elegant means of avoiding what borders on rudeness. In a foreign tongue it is possible to converse any length of time with a nameless "Madame," or even "Mam'zelle," or to refer to her existence with a third person without any awkwardness, while these simple forms of address will be further found to cover all difficulties in determining the often-vexed questions of rank and title. Our language is unquestionably rich in literary excellence, but, it must be admitted, it is somewhat deficient in the delicate amenities of social intercourse.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcoates," etc.

CHAPTER V.

THERE was no reason at all why Miss Walton should take a special interest in Tilly Burton. People who happen to live in the same hotel in London do not rush

into intimacies on that ground. They more usually avoid each other ostentatiously, and only discuss each other in the strict privacy of their own rooms.

But there were two reasons why she inclined to unbend to Tilly: and the strongest, if the basest, of these was the fact that her sister, Mrs. Thompson, had espoused a hearty dislike to the young girl from Scotland. Mrs. Thompson, averring that she was a married woman and a mother—as if she were announcing news, and therefore replete with experiences unplumbed by her sister—was sure that Tilly was a very inferior little person; and the more she inveighed against her dress, her manner, her appearance, her ways, her sayings, her doings, the more Miss Walton was urged to the defence. The other motive that influenced her was Tilly's beauty.

To say that women never admire other women better-looking than themselves is to utter a platitude that has been too credulously accepted as a truth, because it looks as if it ought to be one. Women are often very honest, and sometimes very enthusiastic, admirers of each other. Are the photographs of reigning queens bought by men only? Do the women flock to the Park to give their meed of praise to Beauty's bonnet, and not to the face under it? Or do they all crowd there, as some of them would have us believe, but to sneer and slight and disparage, and to cheapen her charms?

Miss Walton was, at least, not one of this baser sort. She was very passably good-looking herself, but she knew where she fell short, and Tilly was a thousand times prettier than she could ever have been or could ever hope, by any miracle, to be. Tilly was quite distractingly pretty, with that veiled and subtle suggestion she gave you of sweet country delights; quite distractingly pretty with her eyes of the speedwell's blue; her hair that reflected the sun's gold; and her dark brows that arched themselves with so naive a wonder.

"Her hair is dyed, and she paints her eyebrows." This was Mrs. Thompson's verdict.

"She does it better than you, then, Maria," said Maria's sister, with smiling unamiability.

Maria, indeed, did not do it well at all. Nature would not own her for a fellow artist, it repudiated her best efforts; but it was on quite other grounds—on grounds

moral and ethical—that the lady objected to Tilly.

"If you will compromise yourself by talking to the girl, I beg you will wait till I go home, Honoria; you will not have long to wait, as I am going back to Yorkshire to-morrow. I, who have girls of my own to think of, can't afford to be mixed up with doubtful people."

"You are a married woman," said Honoria, repeating a statement that supported every one of Mrs. Thompson's arguments; "it wouldn't hurt you to talk to the child; no one in Yorkshire would be very likely to hear of it; whereas, if she turns out to be any of the dreadful things you suggest, what is to become of my poor, unprotected innocence?"

"You needn't endanger it; you have only to let her alone," said Maria, in obvious conclusion. "But you won't be guided," she added superfluously. "You will take your own way. You always did. I gave you up long ago. If you suffer for your imprudence, you will have no one to thank but yourself."

Thus abandoned, Honoria did, as most outcasts do, just what was expected of her. Since Maria had invited her to the hotel, however, on the plea of helping with the autumn shopping, and had paid her expenses, she had the decency to wait till Maria and the boxes containing the skirts, mantles, and tea gowns, which were to make herself and her girls the envy of other matrons and maids, were being whisked off in the train to Yorkshire.

It had been understood between the sisters that Honoria would, on the following day, remove to less expensive quarters, and the thought consoled Mrs. Thompson on her homeward way. Even Honoria could not compromise herself very deeply in twenty-four hours. But Honoria, after a strict examination of her purse, postponed her departure for some three days longer, and forthwith began her campaign.

Never was a siege more easy to conduct; never a citadel so facile of surrender as the fortress of Tilly's good-will; the chamber-maids were her friends from the first, and would have done anything for her; the waiters, even the one who troubled her with his too zealous services, had benignant looks for her; the busy manager threw an approving glance as she went by.

Miss Walton never quite knew how it was done. In the morning, she exchanged a word with Tilly as they both paused in

the corridor to scan the November sky and read its promise for the day. In the afternoon, she was drinking tea in Tilly's spacious sitting-room—Tilly in one red velvet lounge and she in another, with the cups between them. It seemed to savour of magic, but there was nothing eldritch about it; no witchery but in the charm of a very simple, natural, frank and free nature, unsophisticated enough to believe that almost everybody was nice, and certainly everybody just what he or she seemed to be.

Even Mr. Behrens. How was it that their talk had come round to him?

"Do you know him?" asked Tilly, forgetting that London is not so limited as Liliesmuir.

"No," said Miss Walton, "not at all." There was in the "not at all" a faint emphasis that might mean "and I don't want to know him at all."

"He seems rather lonely," said Tilly, feeling called on to defend her acquaintance with him, though she hardly knew why. "I suppose that is why he likes to be with my uncle. And I thought you might know him, because we didn't know him till we came here—never so much as heard of him before."

"Didn't you?" said Miss Walton diplomatically. "New acquaintances are sometimes very pleasant. I feel as if this were a sort of apology or excuse for my appearance; I am such a very new one myself."

"But I am very glad to see you," Tilly hastened to say, "and my uncle will be very glad too. It was only the other night, and again to-day when he went out with Mr. Behrens, that he was lamenting I hadn't a woman friend——"

"Did he think you would be lonely?" asked Miss Walton, filling up the pause.

Tilly laughed, but she blushed too.

"He wants me to get some new dresses and things"—she glanced deprecatingly at her gown, as if to plead for tolerance for it—"and I don't know where to go, though I daresay the cabmen, who seem to know everything, might know that too. But I've been so busy striving to improve my mind under Mr. Behrens's directions that I've had no time to attend to my body."

"I think I may safely undertake to be your guide in that department," said Miss Walton, "and my experience is at least very recent. My sister, who has just left me, came to town for nothing but to plunder the shops of the very latest fashions.

She has six girls—think of that!—six girls who want school-room frocks, and walking frocks, and nursery frocks, and dinner and evening party and visiting frocks, not to speak of hats, bonnets, mantles, and jackets to go with each respective garment. It sounds like a contract for an army, doesn't it?"

"Do they all dress alike?" asked Tilly, looking very much astonished.

"In pairs," Honoria laughed. "My sister loves method and symmetry above all things; she prefers it to individuality, and she does her best to correct the mistakes of Nature in not giving her three sets of twins. But if you trust to me, I promise to applaud your judgement in all things."

"Well," laughed Tilly, "there's only one of me, so I suppose I may please my own taste. I shouldn't like to have been twins!"

She very frankly accepted this offer of comradeship on her shopping expedition, and forthwith arranged it for the next day.

When Uncle Bob returned, he, too, quite acquiesced in the arrangement. It was just what he wanted—a woman-friend for Tilly. He had noticed Miss Walton—tall and dark, with a pair of bright enough dark eyes; a trifle lanky, but that was a matter of taste. Oh, oh! he knew her; he should consider, for his part, that she was quite topsheff.

"Topsheff, topsheff," Tilly murmured. "Pray what may that mean! We generally put the things we prize least on the topsheff to be out of the way—the cracked, and chipped, and damaged, and unlovely things. I won't have you regard my friend in that light, sir."

"I guess she's all right," laughed Uncle Bob. "I'll ask Behrens; he's a knowing chap; I daresay he can tell us something about her. I'm just going down for a bite of something to eat," he said. "I feel kind o' empty. Tea? No, bless you, my lass, none of your wersh stuff for me—a bit of something solid, just as a put off till dinner-time."

When Uncle Bob came back with that too exacting appetite of his soothed into momentary silence, he had comfortable tidings for Tilly. Behrens knew something of Miss Walton. Behrens, it would seem, made it his business to know something of everybody. Miss Walton's antecedents would bear every investigation. Daughter of a deceased solicitor, who had had an excellent reputation if a very modest

practise. Sister married to a squire, with a place in the North. Not much money, perhaps, but all fair and square, and above-board; and being thus vouched for, Miss Honoria Walton might be allowed to consider herself Tilly's friend.

"We're getting on, we're getting on, my lass," cried Uncle Bob, rubbing his hands together in his honest satisfaction. "It's little outside of a week since we cast anchor here, and here we are setting up to know folks already!"

"A society of two," said Tilly with demure gravity. "First, Mr. Behrens"—he would recognise the propriety of putting him first—"and now, Miss Walton. And there is also Mr. Nameless—we mustn't forget Mr. Nameless."

"And who may he be?"

"Uncle Bob! Uncle Bob!" she shook her bright head at him sadly, "how often must I jog your memory? Mr. Nameless is the banking young man whom you asked to—cold shoulder with Mrs. Popham; and then"—she went on quickly, seeing a cloud beginning to gather on his brow at mention of the lady's name—"there are all my Temple cousins. There are sure to be at least six girls; I've made up my mind for that number; six girls, and Miss Walton and me—eight of us to balance Mr. Behrens, and Mr. Nameless, and you—that's a fair proportion, isn't it?"

"Too much woman!" growled Uncle Bob, making a wry face.

"Ungrateful man!" said Tilly, shaking her sunny head. "Go away to your Behrens, and leave me with my Miss Walton."

Where is the woman—the young, good-looking and cheerful woman—who does not love a day among the shops, the attractive, alluring shops of London? Not merely a gaze from without on the treasures within, though that is charm enough when nothing more may be had; but an inspection, an investigation, a ransacking of every department; a lingering at the counter where seductive laces and ribbons lie in wait to tempt; a tour through the labyrinths of the costume room; a trying-on of bewitching bonnets and hats; a selection of ravishing mantles; a matching of scraps; a contrasting of shades; a spending of a whole quarter's allowance in one glorious campaign!

If girls exist who do not love it—and they of Girton or Newnham may not—neither Honoria Walton nor Tilly Burton was of the number. Tilly had never

hitherto had very much money to spend; wandering Uncle Bob's presents had chiefly reflected the country he happened to be travelling in, and though skins and feathers, shells and corals, are charming in their way, they are, after all, only adjuncts to a toilet in our climate. Now that Uncle Bob was here in the flesh, and no longer represented by rare letters and specimens of native produce, she had more money than she quite knew what to do with; more money than Miss Walton and she could manage to spend, though they bought everything that heart of woman could desire. Tilly's wants, too, had expanded with the day. If there is one temptation which shopkeepers thoroughly understand, it is the lust of the eye.

Tilly's modest list of requirements grew and multiplied with the minutes, and not her wants alone, but the wants, it appeared, of half the population of Lilliesmuir.

"They must have a little taste of London too, poor bodies!" she said in explanation. "Why, I am the only travelled person among them. Cousin Spencer goes to Edinburgh in May for the General Assembly, and 'Lisbeth packs for a week before, with all the parish looking on and assisting with advice. London—why, London is the end of the earth. The rustic mind has hardly followed Uncle Bob any further; it has lost him here—Uncle Bob, who has been round and round the world!"

So she bought gowns, and shawls, and ribbons, tokens from the far country to show that Tilly's heart yet yearned over Lilliesmuir—that she still remembered it in absence.

The shopkeeper who first opened a restaurant in the middle of his chairs and tables, his cottons, linens, silks, and "soft goods," was a very astute person. Tired nature can only tolerate a certain amount of shopping after all; the moment comes when the pangs of hunger will no longer be denied. Our grandmothers, doubtless, went home with many commissions unfulfilled, because of that need of something to eat, to which we must all sooner or later yield.

Something to eat comes to the shopper now, it meets her senses of sight and smell; it obtrudes itself gently on her notice wherever she may penetrate; it steals invitingly into the millinery section, and sends its wandering reminders even up to the region of boots.

Tilly and her new friend had lunched

comfortably, and were fortified to recommence the campaign, and now in another quarter of the big Babylon they were ending the day, the great field-day, with tea, soothed by a virtuous conviction that every duty had been fulfilled. The women and the girls, and even the men of Lilies-muir, had been remembered; the minister and 'Lisbeth had not been forgotten; and between Tilly's cup and Honoria's there lay a parcel containing a dozen pairs of gloves, which were discovered to be Miss Walton's size, and not Tilly's at all. Would Miss Walton mind wearing them? Tilly took sizes—she held up a small slim hand in corroboration of the fact, and these were half a size too big; Miss Walton was so much taller.

Miss Walton did not mind having a whole dozen of new gloves at once, instead of a single pair which was all she usually allowed herself, and they were just the shades she loved, and just the exact number of buttons she preferred. How odd!

How very odd, indeed! Perhaps it was odd, too, that the girls should grow confidential as they rested and chatted, and sipped their tea and counted their parcels; and that Tilly's heart, softened by remembrances of home, of familiar faces looking in vain for hers there, of voices heard no more except in dreams, should talk of the past.

"I always knew it must be past some-day," she said, "and it looks already a long way off. My father and mother died when I was quite small, before I could remember either of them, and then Uncle Bob took me to be his. But he was not rich then; he had his fortune to make, and while he was making it he left me with a cousin."

"And you lived with this cousin till lately?"

"Till a month or two ago. He isn't my cousin, but my father's cousin. He is a minister, and he is old; and his sermons are old; and his housekeeper 'Lisbeth is old. She is 'crabbed age,' indeed, but we got on pretty well all the same."

"Until your uncle came?"

"Until Uncle Bob came, and then we went away, and here we are, and everything has fallen out just as Uncle Bob always declared it would. He is rich, and we are in London together; everything has gone as he planned, except——"

"Except what?"

"Except that we were immediately to have gathered a large social circle about us, and as yet we have gathered only Mr. Paul Behrens."

"And me," put in Miss Walton.

"And you," amended Tilly.

"Did you expect to do that, while you were in a hotel?" asked Miss Walton, marvelling inwardly at the simplicity of this design.

"How is it usually done?" asked Tilly, Scotch fashion, meeting one question with another.

"Well," said her companion dubiously, "I suppose people coming from the country bring introductions, or else they know people already to start with, and get to know more through them in course of time. Don't you know anyone here?"

Tilly hesitated a moment, and then she gravely said "No one." Mrs. Popham's infidelity could not be overlooked or condoned. Mrs. Popham was no longer an acquaintance, and as for a young man whose name you do not even know, how could you include him among your friends?

"No one," she repeated, "not any one; so you see this part of Uncle Bob's programme remains unfulfilled."

"I see," said Miss Walton, glancing at the pretty face opposite hers with something between wonder and competition struggling in her mind. Was there ever such a pair of innocent babes as this old uncle and young niece? Maria was all wrong, of course; they were utterly, ridiculously respectable; their gentleness was even smile-compelling, but yet if they acquired their acquaintances in the haphazard fashion with which they had acquired this Behrens—with which she had even accepted herself—might not the result be as compromising as Maria had prophesied it would be?

"It isn't so difficult to gather a set of acquaintances," she said, clothing her thought in presentable garments; "it never be difficult for you to make friends."

"Tell me how it is done," said Tilly.

"I haven't ordered all my beautiful frocks to waste them on Mr. Behrens."

"And on me."

"Well, then," she laughed, "and on you. Tell me how to conquer; tell me how to succeed!"

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Sept. 1st, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

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CONTENTS OF PART 222.

No. 962.	PAGE	No. 961.	PAGE
Gretchen. Book III. Chapter VII.	361	Gretchen. Book III. Chapters IX., X.	479
Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp. A Story in Six Chapters. Chapters I., II., III.	366	Tea Tattle	416
Our Convent	373	Bones	417
Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Bate and Dum- barton	376	Chronicles of Scottish Counties. Orkney, Shetland, and the Isles	421
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter III.	381	Conversational English	426
		Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter V.	429
No. 963.		No. 965.	
Gretchen. Book III. Chapter VIII.	385	Gretchen. Book IV. Chapter I.	433
Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp. A Story in Six Chapters. Chapters IV., V., VI.	388	Chinese Superstitions.	437
Lifeboat Work	394	Racecourses about London	443
The Herons' Pool. A Poem	398	That Day in June. A Poem	447
A Musical Medley	398	My Friend Crock-r	447
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter IV.	404	Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter VI.	451

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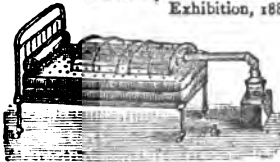
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A Weekly Journal
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SATURDAY, MAY 28, 1887.

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dombey and Son," "My Lord Wrentham,"
"Daisy and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I. OH, IRONY OF FATE!

A MONTH had passed.

Summer was at its height, and the burden and heat of scorching days and feverish nights, of many anxious hours and fitful hopes, had robbed Gretchen's cheek of its bloom, and her step of its lightness.

Adrian Lyle's illness had been more serious even than she had imagined. Never once had he been fully conscious since that night. She had been able to learn nothing more of his reasons for coming to her; she had not the vaguest idea of where he lived, or what friend might be awaiting news of him.

Her own life was just the same. Since that one brief note from Neale, she had heard no more. The first sharpness of agony had given place to a dull ache which never seemed to leave her. She would lie awake for hours on these long hot nights, staring helplessly at the bright sky, or the stars that glittered above the tall tree tops; hating even the cool pulses of the dawns that once had seemed to hold all possibilities; dreading thought, and dreading sleep; and tortured as all young, passionate, unreasoning lives are tortured, for want of the patience and the stoicism which only such tortures teach. It was not only the pain of absence, but the pain of distrust, that she had to bear. It seemed to fill her life and shadow its merest details.

Senses, desires, memories, were all acute, yet a blight seemed to cover her once harmless joy, and she grew restless as

a caged bird in this pretty leafy shelter that had seemed to her once an ideal home.

The old servant noticed how wan and listless she had become, but put it down to the anxiety and care of this long illness. She had refused to have a professional nurse, and took her turns of watching and attendance with rigorous exactitude.

July had followed its sister month, and August had taken its place.

One morning, while the day was yet young, she rose and dressed, and went softly to the sick-room. As she opened the door and looked in, she saw that old Peggy had fallen asleep in her chair at the foot of the bed.

Softly she stole in and went up to where the sick man lay. He was wrapped in slumber—deep, dreamless slumber—the first that had visited his fevered brain for all these weary weeks.

Relieved at such a hopeful sign, the girl moved away to the window and stood there, looking out on that waking world, of which most of us know so little, and care less.

Gretchen both knew and cared. She had always had an intense love for Nature in its every mood and phase. Wearily she leant against the window frame, letting the cool fresh air blow as it would over her loose, rich hair, and touch with tender caress the wan young face.

The beauty which had been hers—that delicate, intangible beauty of extreme youth, exquisite as the bloom of a peach, the petals of a flower—had been suddenly extinguished. She looked like some beaten-down lily as she stood there in the golden glow of the morning light, every line of the fragile figure betokening weariness, and languor, and pain.

It was to see her thus—to see her standing there in her white gown, and with the

sunlight warm on cheek and brow—that Adrian Lyle's eyes first made use of recovered consciousness.

For a moment he thought he was dreaming. Weak as a child; scarce conscious of what he was doing, or where he was; he tried to raise himself on one feeble elbow, and gently called her name.

She turned at once, and looked with startled eyes at that weird and haggard spectacle of manhood's weakness.

In a second she had crossed the room and was by his side.

"You are better!" she cried eagerly. "Oh, I am so glad—so glad."

He sank helplessly back, dizzy and faint, as with some great shock of joy.

"Why are you—here?" he whispered with effort.

"Hush," she said. "Do not speak. You are still so weak and ill. Oh, but it is good that you should know me at last! But I must not let you talk or you will be ill again, and," nodding her pretty head gravely, "I do not want to nurse you all over once more."

She held some cordial to his lips, and he drank it unresistingly, then his eyes closed for very weariness, but he could not sleep with that unanswered wonder in his brain. "Tell me," he urged faintly, "where I am? I will promise to ask nothing more."

"You are with—me," she said softly, "in my own house. You came to see me—do you not remember?—on the night of the storm. You would not stay, and I think as you went out of the gate the lightning struck that great tree beside it, and one branch struck you. You lay there all night—and I never knew. Oh," clasping her small hands eagerly, "if only I had known! But in the morning I found you, and you have been here ever since. And now you are going to get well, and reward me for all my anxiety, are you not? For indeed I was very, very anxious."

"And how long ago," he asked faintly, "was that storm?"

"It must be nearly a month," she said thoughtfully. "And now please do not talk. If you will only try to sleep, that will be so good for you."

He felt the touch of the little hand on his brow; he felt her smooth the pillows; the scent of the rose at her throat seemed to his sick fancy sweet as no earthly flower had ever been; and then a great peace and calm stole over him, and he fell asleep in unutterable content, and so slept on till noon was well past.

The crisis was over. The fever had left him—spent, exhausted, weaker than any year-old child, it is true, but still safe, and with steps set towards that first stage of convalescence which means so much after weeks of pain and dread.

Gradually, as that first day lapsed into other days, and he gained strength and memory with each, he remembered that no account of his strange absence had reached his Rector, and besought Gretchen to write and inform him of the accident. She wrote the letter at his dictation and sitting by his side, and it was while watching her at the task that Adrian Lyle first noticed some strange, indefinable change in her face. It struck so coldly, so suddenly, that he lost the thread of what he was saying, and remained gazing at her with something of horror in his startled eyes. Wondering at his silence she looked up, and met that strange, questioning glance.

"What is it?" she asked, frightened at some revelation that set her pulses leaping in an odd, nervous fashion which had come to her of late.

"You," he said hurriedly; "are you ill? have you been ill? There is, I am sure there is something."

A little faint flush rose to her cheek. She did not speak immediately, but as she raised her hand to push back a stray lock of hair, the loose, white sleeve fell back, and he saw how painfully slender it looked—how clearly the delicate tracery of veins showed through the transparent skin.

"I am quite well," she said almost impatiently, "only the heat makes me tired. Please go on."

He continued dictating. But that vague uneasiness could not be stilled. He grew restless and ill at ease. As yet he had not had courage to ask news of Neale Kenyon; but he summoned resolution now, and put the question abruptly, almost roughly, as she stood a little apart sealing and stamping the concluded letter.

Her face grew cold and pale; she bent it hurriedly down over the envelope. "Do you not know?" she said. "I thought he must have told you. He has gone to the war!"

"The war!" echoed Adrian Lyle stupidly. "What war?"

"There is war," she said, "in some part of India. His regiment was ordered there, and he has gone. Did he not tell you?" she repeated.

"No," said Adrian Lyle. "It must have been very sudden."

"It was," she said, trying hard to control her agitation. After a moment or two she turned her face to him. "You have never told me," she said, "how you found me here that night; you said you had heard I was ill, and had sent for you, but that was not true. Neale could not have told you—that."

"No," said Adrian Lyle, "it was not Neale; it was Bari."

"Bari!" she cried, pale and startled. "He—he has never been here. How could he say what was so false?"

"I cannot tell," said Adrian Lyle, his brow growing stormy. "It was an infamous lie. I suppose he had some object. But I cannot fathom it at present."

"Nor I," she said. "You must have thought it very strange."

"At first, yes; but he led me to believe that you were unsettled about religious matters, that you wanted counsel and assistance."

"I have wanted that often," she said sadly; "but I should not have troubled you, though I believe in your friendship. And to think," she added indignantly, "that you have undergone all this suffering and danger for the sake of Bari's falsehoods. What could have been his object?"

"I cannot tell," said Adrian Lyle; "but I will find out," he added determinedly. "I will find out!"

Then, for the first time, something like awkwardness and embarrassment took possession of him. He was lying here helpless and ill. Kenyon was away. Yet, in his absence he had been lured to his wife's side by a false message. What did it mean? He moved restlessly on his pillows.

"I shall soon be able to relieve you of the burden of my presence," he said. "I cannot tell you how grieved I am to think of all the trouble and annoyance I must have occasioned."

"Indeed, no!" she said simply. "It was so much my own fault. I should not have allowed you to leave in such a storm. But you hurried away so quickly—and I was so surprised——"

"You must have been," he said bitterly. "More especially as you had forgotten my very existence—so you were frank enough to tell me."

"Ah, yea," she said penitently, "that was not a polite welcome, was it? But I was too startled to think of what I said."

"I hope," Adrian Lyle murmured gently, "that you will always speak the truth to me without regard to politeness. I can't bear to think of you as anything but perfectly frank."

"I always am that," she said, "to you." She put the letter down and seated herself on the low chair by his bed.

"Shall I read to you?" she said; "there is still an hour before tea."

"I think," he answered, "I would rather talk—if you do not mind."

"Oh no," she said, putting the book on the table beside her, "if you are strong enough."

"I am certainly that," he said with a faint smile. "For I must leave you to-morrow, or next day."

She looked up startled and pained.

"Leave!" she cried. "Oh, that would be foolish, indeed. You would only make yourself ill again. You are far too weak to move."

"I can be taken to the inn in the village," he said resolutely. "I have asked the doctor to let me go there."

"The inn!" faltered the girl. "But why will you not stop here? I can take as good care of you as the people at the inn. It is only a poor, rough place."

"It will do," he said resolutely. "Oh, cannot you understand? It is not fitting I should stay under your roof, while your husband is away."

She looked up at him pale and startled.

"Why should he mind?" she asked. "You are his friend too!"

"Perhaps," said Adrian Lyle coldly. "But you must allow me to judge what is best and fitting. You are young, and innocent, and unworldly——"

"I feel old enough," she said wistfully, as he paused.

His eyes turned yearningly and regretfully to her face. It was changed, most sadly changed, though as lovely in its pallor and delicacy as ever he had deemed it in its bright, fresh youth. She leant forward a little, and clasped her hands upon her knees.

"I am so lonely," she said; "do not go."

It seemed to Adrian Lyle that, often as that formula, "lead us not into temptation," had been on his lips, he had never fully understood its meaning till this moment.

The swift beating of his heart almost stifled him; the stillness of the room; the faint scents of the roses in her dress; the

face itself looking back to his own with such beseeching eyes—all seemed like part of some strange dream. But there was pain in the dream—pain, real, and acute, and hard to bear in this hour of physical weakness.

He dared not look at her. He wondered if she heard those slow heavy throbs that beat like hammers in his brain. How could she be so unconscious and—he—so overpowered!

She spoke again, and a little pale effort at a smile touched her lips.

"I know you are resolute and hard to move, and my powers to persuade you are so feeble; but when one is all alone, and has no friend anywhere, it seems hard to look forward to——"

Then her voice broke. He saw great tears gather in her eyes; her lips quivered like a child's.

"Oh," she cried piteously, "I must tell you, or my heart will break. I have no one—no one. And Neale has gone so far, and will be away so long. It is terrible to be alone as I am alone. And he says I must stay here till he returns. Oh, Mr. Lyle, would he—would he be very angry if I went to him?"

"Went to—him!" echoed Adrian Lyle. "My poor child, it would be madness. You could not reach him. Besides, it is not allowable for officers to have their wives with them when they are on active service. You would only make Kenyon doubly anxious. Did he not explain all this to you?"

"I did not see him," she faltered slowly.

Adrian Lyle started.

"Do you mean to say that he did not come here to bid you good-bye?"

She shook her head.

"There was no time," she said loyally.

"It was all so sudden."

He looked at the altered face; the bent head; the slight, fragile young figure. Well enough he read the secret of their change now; and that change added the bitterness of another burden to his heavy heart.

"Poor child!" he said pityingly; "poor child!"

"Oh—don't," she cried quickly, "don't pity me. I can't bear it. It—it has been very hard; but I was getting over it. I think having you to nurse and think of helped me. And if only it were not so—so lonely——"

There was a pause which seemed to Adrian Lyle to hold a lifetime of silence. Thoughts,

vague, wild, confused, whirled through his brain; the brain that was still weak and dizzy from the shock of that terrible illness. She was lonely, sad, in trouble; she needed a friend; and he was so great a coward that he dared not trust himself in her presence, dared not shelter beneath the same roof. He felt he could cry shame on himself; but he was so weak now, and so unhappy, that he could have turned his face to the wall and wept like a woman. The effort would cost him hours of after suffering; but he made it nobly and heroically, speaking to her as he would have spoken to a grieving child; for what was she but a child still!

"You must try," he said, "to be patient and brave; it is the duty of a soldier's wife. After all, it will be best for a few months, at most, this parting. To follow Kenyon would be impossible. Had it been otherwise, you may be sure he would have done his best to take you with him. The separation must be just as hard for him as for yourself."

She swayed towards him with a little unconscious movement.

"Oh," she said simply, "how kind you are! The very tone of your voice holds comfort. No doubt you are right. It was not his fault, and I ought not to have blamed him; but it did seem hard just at first."

"Did you blame him in your heart?" asked Adrian Lyle, with a faint, sad smile. "I fancy you only imagined you did."

"Yes—it hurt me," she said, her voice a little tremulous. "Written words sound so cold, and I had not seen him for so long."

"Did you know he was at Medehurst Abbey?" asked Adrian Lyle.

"No," she said in surprise. "He only said he was going to London when he left me here, and his letters were from London. Who lives at Medehurst Abbey?"

"His uncle and cousin," said Adrian Lyle. "Do you mean to say he has never told you of them?"

"No," she said. "I knew he had some relations. He said it was duty for him to go and see them. I do not know their names. Is the cousin a lady?" she asked with sudden curiosity.

"Yes," answered Adrian Lyle.

"And—and young, and beautiful," she went on, gazing at him with sudden interest.

"Men say so," he answered indifferently. "Your husband does not think so. I believe he rather dislikes her."

For a moment she was silent, her eyes on the circlet of gold which she was absently turning round and round on her slender finger.

Adrian Lyle watched her, reading plainly enough the trouble in the passionate young heart.

"She is too young for that sting to pain her heart," he thought. "What has chilled that beautiful faith, I wonder?"

"How did you know her?" she asked presently.

"How?" Adrian Lyle started. His thoughts had been far away. "Oh, you mean Miss Kenyon. I am living close to the Abbey. I am curate at Medehurst Church."

"And Neale was there—staying there?" she persisted.

"Yes. That was where I met him for the first time since we parted in Rome."

"Ah," she sighed, "dear Rome, how beautiful it was!" Then her eyes drooped, her voice grew softer and more wistful. "Do you remember," she asked, "that day in the Pantheon, and all you said?"

"I remember," he said huskily, "only too well."

"I thought of it all," she said, "when you lay here so ill. I suppose it was being unhappy and lonely that brought it all back. When one is happy, one does not think much."

"I suppose not," he answered gently. "You had forgotten me, I know."

"No—not forgotten; only put you aside for a little time."

"Well, you have made amends," he answered. "To your care and nursing I owe my recovery. It is a debt I can never repay."

"And yet what haste you are in to leave me!" she said reproachfully.

The blood rushed like flame to his cheek. "For your own sake," he said falteringly. "It would not do. I am sure Neale would not like it."

"There," she said quickly, "you are wrong. He would like what I liked—he would bid me do just as I pleased."

"Don't make duty harder," said Adrian Lyle, with an attempt at lightness. "You know I am an obstinate man."

He kept his eyes resolutely away from the sweetness of that beseeching face. He felt that the worst phase of his madness was this phase, when every innocent look and word could so bewilder his brain, and tempt both sense and reason.

She rose from her low chair at last; a

little startled look came into her eyes. "I have talked to you too much," she said; "you look so pale and tired. I will leave you now if you will promise me to try to sleep. There—let me smooth your pillows more comfortably. Is that better?"

"It is delightful," he said, keeping his voice steady by a great effort. "I will take your advice and try to sleep. Would you mind drawing that blind down? Thank you, that will do—the light dazzles me—a little."

He turned his face away; he heard the faint, soft flutter of her gown across the floor; he heard her open the door—close it—and a great darkness and horror seemed to come over him; and he lay there staring blankly, stupidly at the wall, conscious only of an agony which had threatened to master self-control—conscious that something hot and burning touched his cheeks, something that was far removed from sleep, or rest; and, as he lifted his hand and drew it across his eyes, he saw it tremble like a leaf.

"Oh," he cried, "to think that I should be so weak—so pitifully, miserably weak."

CHINESE SUPERSTITIONS.

"It is New Year's Day, and the first great duty of every householder is going forward. Master and man are busily engaged in the worship and propitiation of their household gods." Thus wrote Augustus Margary in the City of Chefoo, on the seventeenth of February (Chinese New Year), 1874.

And this is what he saw of the strange ritual, beginning before daylight, and amid the weird, fitful glimmer of a few candles: a dim, uncertain light, not without its influence on the superstitious devotees. A table was neatly laid out with a cold banquet, with seats, plates, and chopsticks, so that the spirits of the departed might come and enjoy. After a preliminary ceremony, consisting of the burning of joss-sticks and of kneeling and kow-towing before them, master and man took their places behind the empty seats, ready to attend to the wants of the invisible guests. There they remained in silent and reverential readiness for a time sufficient to enable the spirits to conclude their feasting satisfactorily; and, as a full-blown ceremonious Chinese dinner continues for hours, we may suppose that the greater portion of the day was thus consumed. Then, when it

might reasonably be concluded that the guests had finished, a tremendous "feu-de-joie" was fired outside the front-door. As at the same moment the same thing is being done in every house in China, the expenditure on gunpowder alone must be considerable.

On an island in the Tungtin Lake, called Chun-shan, celebrated for producing the finest tea in China, Margary encountered a perfect plague of flies, which followed him right across the lake, and never ceased to torment. These flies are armed with a strong proboscis, with which they inflict a sting as acute as that of the mosquito, although not venomous. They sting without leaving either mark or pain after they are brushed off. The Chinese say that these flies are the soldiers of the Lake Spirit, who sends them to attack all intruders in his domain.

Shang-le, or precious relics of Buddha, are so abundant, that only a miracle could explain their number. Dr. Medhurst throws some light on their history. According to the Buddhists there are eighty-four thousand pores in a man's body, and, therefore, he leaves behind him eighty-four thousand particles of miserable dust in the course of transmigration. Buddha had also eighty-four thousand pores in his body, but by his resistance to evil he was enabled to perfect eighty-four thousand relics through them, for which eight Kings contended. A good and wise King, named Ayuka, arose, who built eighty-four thousand pagodas to cover these eighty-four thousand relics. These relics still remain, but can only be seen by the faithful. A good Buddhist can sometimes discern one of these relics illumined with brilliant colours and as big as a cart-wheel, when unbelievers are unable to see anything at all.

A superstition, current in some parts of China is, that earthquakes are caused by the shaking of some huge subterraneous animal. Mr. Robert Fortune relates that when he was at Shanghai in 1853, there was a slight shock, and, after it was over, he saw groups of Chinese about the fields and gardens, industriously gathering hairs of the mysterious animal! Hairs they certainly did collect; but a close examination showed that some were mere vegetable fibres, and others the hairs shed by dogs, horses, or cats, which might be gathered any day. The pointing out of these facts did not shake the belief of the Chinese that the hairs were really those of the earth-shaker.

The worship of the moon—the Queen of Heaven—is universal, and the images of Kwan-Jin with a child in her arms are to be found everywhere. This goddess is prayed to by women who are desirous of having children, and when they enter the shrine they leave their shoes there. It is not unusual to find a whole heap of the small shoes of the Chinese ladies in these sacred places, and the suggestion occurs whether the old custom in our own country of throwing an old shoe after a newly-married pair, for luck, may not have had some remote connection with the superstition still existing in China.

The river Tsien-tang, on which is situated the city of Hang-Chow, is famous for its "eagre," or "bore," which far surpasses, we are told, the "bore" of the Hooghly. It is regarded by the Chinese as one of the three wonders of the world, and must be, indeed, a sufficiently awe-inspiring spectacle. It makes its appearance in the spring-tides, and rushes up with a noise like thunder—a wall of water about thirty feet high and four or five miles broad. This natural phenomenon is attributed by the Chinese to a Mandarin, one Wu-Tsi-si, who, having offended the Emperor, was slain and thrown into this river. His rage at the treatment was so great that he exhibits it periodically by taking the form of the "eagre," and breaking down the river's banks and flooding the adjoining fields. Successive monarchs of successive dynasties—for the incident happened long before the present era—have conferred titles on him; temples innumerable have been erected in his honour; and prayers and sacrifices are periodically offered to him; but still his anger endures, an example of sustained "vendetta" which, no doubt, would be well appreciated in Corsica.

Chinese junks and boats have eyes carved or painted on the bows, which are usually supposed to be a mere fanciful form of ornamentation. But they have a real meaning, as Mr. Fortune found. In going up one of the rivers from Ningpo, he was startled by one day seeing a boatman seize his broad hat and clap it over one of the "eyes" of the boat, while other boats on the stream were similarly blinded. Looking about for an explanation he saw a dead body floating past, and he was told by the boatman that if the boat had been allowed to "see" it, some disaster would surely have happened, either to passengers or crew, before the voyage ended!

Mr. Denny, who has told much of the folk-lore of China, says that in the Lui-Chau district, the belief exists that violent winds and typhoons are caused by the passage through the air of the "Bob-tailed Dragon," and also of the rain-god, Yü-Shüh. Similarly when a storm arises, the Cantonese say: "The Bob-tailed Dragon is passing." There is a temple in the Lui-Chau, dedicated to the Thunder-Duke, in which the people every year place a drum for the demon to beat. In olden days the drum used to be left on a hill-top, and a little boy was left along with it as a sacrifice.

The God of Fire is an object of much respect among a people whose dwellings are so combustible. In all the cities, temples are erected and kept in first-rate order to his honour. The story goes, that the Emperor Kien-Taing had the misfortune to have his magnificent Hall of Contemplation, which had been erected at vast expense, burned to the ground, because one little temple to the Fire-God outside the walls of Pekin had been allowed to fall into disrepair. And yet, as a curious instance of the flexible character of the religion of this curious people, it may be mentioned that the home of the London Medical Mission in Pekin is one of the old temples of the Fire God. Dr. Dudgeon purchased it for a hospital, and all the wooden and gilded idols were sold as curiosities. Some of these idols were dissected by Dr. Dudgeon, and were found to contain careful representations of all the internal arrangements of the human body. This is done because of the belief that as nothing is hidden from the gods, they can of course see the insides of the images erected in their honour, which images, it will be observed, can nevertheless be made subject to trade, when occasion arises.

Apropos of the Fire God, Miss Gordon-Cumming mentions having seen, beside one of the gates of the city of Foo-Chow, seven stone water-jars, each enclosed by a stone railing. The tradition is that, so long as there is water in these jars there will be no fire in the city; and hence it is the duty of a special official to see that, even in the driest season, the water is not allowed to dry up.

One of the religions of China is the worship of Fo or Buddha, of whom it is believed that immediately after his birth, he stood up and said: "No one except myself, either in heaven or upon earth, ought to be worshipped." At the age of seven-

teen, Fo married three wives; at nineteen, he retired to study under four sages; at thirty, he became a deity, and thenceforward began to practise miracles; at seventy-nine, he passed into an immortal state, leaving behind him eighty thousand disciples. These published five thousand volumes in his honour, and related that Fo had been born eight thousand times, his soul passing successively through different animals. The five commandments left by Fo were: I. Not to kill any living creature; II. Not to steal; III. Not to commit any impurity; IV. Not to tell a lie; V. Not to drink wine.

Another religion is that of Tao, which, as well as that of Fo, has its orders of monks and established monasteries. The monks or priests of Tao are a sort of Epicureans, who teach that happiness consists in a calm, which suspends all the operations of the soul. They live in communities, do not marry, use chaplets, are clothed in yellow, and always officiate at funerals and sacrifices. They believe in a plurality of gods; and are much given to occult science, practising alchemy and pretending to magic arts, which afford them familiar intercourse with spirits. The importance of this power is well realised in China, where it is supposed that every part of the universe is under the influence of good and bad spirits, who have their respective districts. The good spirits are a kind of tutelar genii, to whom sacrifices are offered in the temples, as well as to the spirits of the rivers, the mountains, the four parts of the world, and so forth.

The Heavens and the Earth, however, are regarded rather as intelligent beings, or divinities, and in Pekin two of the most magnificent buildings are the "Temple of Heaven" and the "Temple of Earth." In each of these temples, the Emperor officiates in person once every year, going in great state, attended by all the nobles and a vast crowd of choristers and attendants. In the grounds of the Temple of Earth he goes through the ceremony of ploughing several furrows, afterwards sowing the seeds with his own hands. This may be taken as not only a tribute to the deity, but also as a practical example and encouragement to the people to practise agriculture. For a most interesting account of these remarkable temples and their ceremonies, the reader is referred to Miss Gordon-Cumming's "Wanderings in China."

In Canton there is a temple dedicated to

the Five Rams, on which the five genii, who preside over the five elements of Earth, Fire, Metal, Water, and Wood, descended from heaven to Canton, bearing ears of corn and other blessings. These rams are said to have become petrified into five great stones, which now ornament the temple. Here, also, is shown a colossal foot-print of Buddha in the rock.

In another temple in this city is a shrine to the god Lin-Fuung, whose function is to aid in restoring runaway slaves to their masters. Beside his image is that of an attendant on horseback, waiting to do the bidding of the god; and on the horse's neck the suppliants tie cords 'as a hint that they desire their slaves to be found and restored to them.

A method of ascertaining the will of the gods is divination by the Ka-pue, a piece of wood shaped like an acorn, in two halves, one side convex, the other flat. "The person who wishes to consult the oracle kneels reverently before the image of the god or goddess whose counsel he craves, and, having explained the subject on which he wants advice, he takes the Ka-pue off the altar, passes it through the smoke of the incense, and then throws it upward before the idol."

According to the manner in which the two halves fall he reads his answer. Thus, if both fall flat, he knows that his prayer is refused; if both fall on the rounded side, then the god has really no opinion in the matter; if one falls flat and the other round, then his prayer will be granted.

A little skill and preliminary practice would, one might think, be sufficient to procure a favourable augury whenever required.

There is another method of divination by means of strips of split bamboo, each numbered. These are placed in a stand and gently shaken until one falls out. The number on this is compared by the priest with a corresponding number in a book, from which he reads the oracular reply. This is strikingly like a practice related by Tacitus of the Germans. He says (German., Chap. X.): "They cut a rod off some fruit tree into bits, and after having distinguished them by various marks, they cast them into a white cloth. Then the priest thrice draws each piece and explains the oracle according to the marks." There is in both superstitions also a suggestion of the divining-rod, or magic wand, not unknown in our own country.

In China we find another instance of a

superstition akin to one of our own. Thus the Governor of the Province of Fuh-Kieng not long ago issued a proclamation to the following effect: "You are forbidden, if you have a grudge against any one, to practise the magic called 'striking the bull's head,' that is to say, writing a man's name and age on a scrap of paper and laying it before the bull-headed idol, and then buying an iron stamp and piercing small holes in this paper, and finally throwing it at the man on the sly with the intention of compassing his death." Compare with this the fact that, so recently as 1883, a case occurred at Inverness of an assault because one person discovered that another person had made a clay image of him and stuck pins in it, with the object of compassing his death! Belief in witchcraft is not altogether dead even in our enlightened land, but happily it is rare.

Du Halde, who wrote a "Description of China" about 1738, says that the practice of magic and the study of astrology were carried on in China as a recognised branch of learning, and that even the Tribunal of Mathematics devoted itself in part to the occult. One of the functions of this Tribunal was to foretell eclipses, so that the common people might be warned beforehand, and be ready with great shouts to frighten away the demon who was supposed to be endeavouring to devour the sun or moon. Much of the magical arts and curious superstitions mentioned by Du Halde as prevalent a hundred and fifty years ago, seem to prevail still, for we find Miss Gordon-Cumming in 1879 encountering similar experiences. This last writer observed that in Chinese houses the traditional "horse-shoe" of our country is there replaced by a sword-shaped toy made of hundreds of the small copper coin or "cash," fastened together with red thread. This is hung up for luck, while charms written on red paper, and fire-crackers made up in scarlet covers, are used to frighten away devils. The virtue attached to the colour "red" particularly attracted Miss Gordon-Cumming's notice, because she remembered that in Scotland, till very recent years, it was a common practice for cowherds to tie a sprig of mountain ash with red twine to the door of the byre, or to twist a red thread round the cow's tail.

One of the risings against the Christians at Foo-Chow, when many of the native converts were ill-treated, was a result of a

distribution over the province of a powder, warranted to prevent calamity and disease. As soon as this had been eagerly purchased by the people, a notice was placarded everywhere that this powder was not what it professed, but had been distributed by the "foreign devils," in order to strike, as with subtle venom, everyone who used it with a terrible disease which only the missionaries could cure, and that only on the condition of the sufferers becoming Christians, and practising all manners of vile crimes. The fact that this calumny was universally believed at the time, sufficiently shows the strength of the belief of the Chinese of to-day in sorcery.

The great overruling superstitions of China are, however, the fear of the dead, and the belief in Feng-Shui. The latter word means literally "wind and water," and seems to typify both the good and the baneful influences of physical phenomena. It is the existence of these two superstitions which really forms the barrier to progress in China, because they interfere with the reception of foreign ideas and the development of industrial projects in mining, railway making, and so forth. Feng-Shui is defined, says the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ningpo, as "the path of the Great Dragon, who rushes through the air just above the houses, spouting blessings in showers from his nostrils. He flies straight forward, unless by evil chance he should strike against some high building, in which case he turns aside at an angle, and so the houses beyond lose their share of his blessing. Hence the zealous care of the Chinese house-builders lest anyone should build a house higher than his neighbour, and the singular uniformity of domestic architecture."

The fear of the dead leads to the most slavish form of ancestor-worship, and the three first weeks of April are specially devoted to the service of the Shades. At that time everyone visits the graves of his relations with offerings, carried on trays or in baskets. The cost of these annual services and offerings to the dead is stated by Miss Gordon-Cumming to be not less than thirty-two millions sterling, all to propitiate the spirits of those whose graves cover the country, and who are believed to be powerful for evil if neglected. The dead are even honoured by the bestowal of new titles if there is special reason for distinguishing them.

After a person dies, the body may not

be buried until the soothsayers have selected a "favourable day," and this they may not find it convenient to do for a year or more, if there is money forthcoming for the various tests. These professional geomancers make a very good thing out of the superstitions of the people, for the stars are supposed to affect not only individuals but also every day in the year, for good or evil. "There are certain days," says Miss Gordon-Cumming, "on which no man in his senses will shave, lest he be afflicted with boils; others, on which no farmer would sow, else a bad harvest would follow. There are days on which no man would buy or sell property; others, when to dig a well will ensure finding only bitter water. To open a granary on certain days would be to admit mice and mildew; to begin roofing a house on a given day betokens having soon to sell it. There is one day on which no householder would repair his kitchen fireplace, as his house would inevitably ere long be burnt. Another day is shunned by matchmakers as ensuring ill-luck to the wedded pair. One day is especially dreaded by shipbuilders, for, to commence building a ship or to allow one to sail thereon, is to court shipwreck. So in the rearing of cattle; the care of silkworms; in travelling or staying at home; days of luck or ill-luck must be specially observed, lest the stars in their courses should fight against the presumptuous mortal who ignores them."

Not exactly a superstition, but interesting as bearing a close resemblance to the European legend of the Swan-Maiden, is the Chinese legend of Ming-ling-tzu. This, in the story as told by Dennys, was the name of a poor farmer, who, going one day to draw water from a well near his house, found a woman bathing in it. Annoyed at having his well fouled and scandalised at the "shameless ways" of the female, Mang-ling-tzu carried off the clothes which she had hung on a pine tree. When she emerged from the bath he confronted her, and, having duly scolded her, took her to be his wife, but refused to give her back her clothes. They lived together ten years, and had two children, and then, one fine day, the woman bade these farewell while her husband was absent, climbed a tree, mounted thence on to a cloud, and, gliding off upon it, was seen no more.

And to conclude this paper, as we began, with the New Year, we may mention a curious custom in Canton, on the authority of Miss Gordon-Cumming. In that city—we know not if universally in China—it is

a positive necessity for all accounts to be settled before the close of the old year, and tradesmen will then sell their goods at any price in order to meet their liabilities. Any one who fails to do so is disgraced, and his name is written on his own door as a defaulter. Debts, which are not settled on New Year's Eve cannot be subsequently recovered, and, therefore, a creditor will pursue his debtor all night long in order to procure payment in time. He is even permitted to lengthen the night by the fiction of carrying a lighted lantern even after daybreak, as if it were still night.

There is one thing, however, which always protects a debtor from an importunate creditor, and that is the presence of a corpse in the house. For this reason, dutiful children will often retain their father's body in the house for years, knowing, in the midst of their grief, that so long as the body is with them, they can be neither dunned for debt nor "evicted" for rent, should they find it inconvenient to pay.

RACECOURSES ABOUT LONDON.

EPSOM.

NOT always had the citizens of London to seek their recreation at a distance, even at such a moderate distance as Epsom. "Without one of the city gates," writes the Monk of Canterbury in the twelfth century, "is a certain plaine field"—the Smithfield of to-day, devoted to the carcasses of cattle, "Smithfield, or the field of Smiths, the grove of hobby-horses and trinkets," of Ben Jonson's day; but in the time of Fitzstephen the Monk, "a celebrated rendezvous of fine horses, brought thither to be sold. Thither came Earls, Barons, Knights, and a swarm of citizens; races are run there, and the course cleared with shouts."

As we read we fancy we hear the roar of voices from the modern racecourse, as the armed ranks of burly policemen push the crowd before them, with the oft-repeated cry, "Off you go! off you go!" Yes, we still clear the course with shouts, and seven centuries in passing over the land have only strengthened and confirmed the national passion for horse-racing—Earls, Barons, Knights, or Baronets, at all events, and crowds of citizens are still to be found where races are run; and if the Earls, Barons, and the rest of them, have not kept pace with the increase of population, the swarms of undistinguished

spectators have, and to spare. As the greatest crowds of all the year find their way to Epsom, to Epsom let us go.

It is not easy to fix a date when Epsom first became famous for its races. The Downs were, no doubt, always the resort of the people of the country round for sports and exercises, among which horse-racing would have a conspicuous share. But the first meeting on record was rather in the nature of a conspiracy, a number of Royalist gentlemen of Kent and Surrey having met, towards the end of the Civil War, under pretext of a horse-race, and there collected some six hundred horses, which were marched to Reigate in aid of the projected rising for the King, then a prisoner.

This incident led to the general suppression of racing during the Commonwealth, as affording dangerous opportunities for the Royalist gentry to assemble; and thus, perhaps, first arose a kind of religious intolerance for horse-racing, which has surely no adequate foundation. Cromwell himself might have basked his White Turk over the Knavesmire, and the strictest sectary of the day would hardly have found fault, and John Milton's poetic soul would have rejoiced in one of the great gatherings of the day

Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize.

Before the troubled times of the Civil Wars racing had flourished at an equal rate with the increase of wealth and luxury. Newmarket was already a centre of the sport; races were always going on in the vicinity of the Court, whether the King were at Theobald's, Windsor, or Whitehall. In the neighbourhood of the last, Hyde Park was the principal scene of races, whether horse or foot. Shirley's play of Hyde Park, which was licensed in 1632, gives us a lively picture of an impromptu race-meeting of the period. A band of gay young fellows, with the ladies of their choice, set forth from their lodgings on foot, to witness and share in the sports. A noted gentleman rider, Jack Venture, is among the party, and is asked for a sporting song upon the way:

And as we walk, Jack Venture, thou shalt sing
The song thou mad'st o' the horses.

As Jack's song gives a good list of the horses famous at the period, while some of the names are not without associations

of their own, we may be allowed to give a verse or two :

Young Constable and Kill Deer's famous,
The Cat, the Mouse, and Neddy Gray ;
With nimble Peggybrig, you cannot blame us,
With Spaniard nor with Spinola.
Hill-climbing White Rose praise doth not lack,
Handsome Dunbar and Yellow Jack.
But if I be just, all praises must
Be given to well-breathed Jilian Thrust.

Another verse celebrates Sloven, with true-running Robin, Young Shaver, and Strawberry Soam, a name probably perverted by the printer of the period from Strawberry Roan ; "Fine Brackley and brave lurching Bess." And, skipping a name or two not exactly fit for ears polite, we may give another verse :

Lusty George, and gentlemen, hark yet !
To winning Mackarel, fine-mouthed Freak,
Bay Tarral that won the Cup at Newmarket,
Thundering Tempest, Black Dragon eke,
Precious Sweetlips I do not lose,
Nor Toby with his golden shoes.
But if I be just, etc.

Chorus, gentlemen, if you please ! And when we reach the course, our stage directions give : "Confused noise of betting within," just such a confused roar as we may hear on any racecourse at the present day. Ah, that betting ! They were at it hammer-and-tongs in the year sixteen hundred and thirty odd, just as they are in this jubilee year of grace ; and far beyond our day in the centuries that are to come, the prophetic listener may hear that "confused noise of betting."

While the gentlemen are gaming, drinking, and racing, the ladies are eating syllabub at the lodge and saying ill-natured things to each other with the most charming smiles. Meanwhile, Jack Venture is mounted for a match ; his own nag against another ridden by a professional jockey. Venture gets the best of the jockey at the start, and leaves the latter at the post. The betting is any odds on the gentleman, when Jack steers his horse into a quagmire and tumbles into the mud, while his adversary canters home a winner.

Shirley's play was thought enough of to be revived after the Commonwealth, and Pepys chronicles the performance when real horses were brought upon the stage, all which goes to show the popularity of horse-racing and the enterprise of managers at a period which is not without its resemblance to our own.

The advent of the Merry Monarch brought life at all events to Epsom. The first race meeting after the Restoration was held on the Downs on the 7th March,

1661. The stakes then run for were what we should now consider trifling, as appears by an announcement of a subsequent race meeting in the "London Gazette." "On Banstead Downs two plates of twenty pounds value each to be run for on May Day, and the other on Bartholomew Day following ; for any horse that shall be at Charshalton, Barrowes Hedges, or some of the contributors' stables fourteen days before." The stakes were three guineas apiece, and were divided, no doubt, as an addition to the plate. The races were then run in heats, so many separate matches, as was the case in nearly all races during the subsequent century. Long distances were the rule, and the cruelty of such an ordeal for horses may be judged from a sporting print of the eighteenth century depicting the preparation of a horse for his final heat, the poor animal, exhausted and almost foundered by a recent struggle, being vigorously rubbed and anointed to bring him up to the post for another race.

A little of this racing lore is necessary to bring us into a suitable mood for approaching Epsom, where we may hear plenty about the more modern history of its racecourse. But a jaunt to the Downs is as pleasant a diversion as can be imagined, when the first fine day of the season tempts you abroad—whether with sporting notions or in the pure delight of loafing. The season is spring, of course, or speaking in the language of Epsom, between the "City and Suburban" and the "Derby." There is a city and suburban air about the way down certainly till we reach Worcester Park, where there are big country houses that look as if they ought to have each a park to itself, with woods, and commons, and farmsteads dependent, but all standing in a row, as if this were an asylum for country houses, brought low by agricultural depression. Now this name, Worcester Park, sounds like a builder's name, invented for the benefit of the substantial houses just mentioned. But this is not the case, for this is really Nonsuch Great Park, that was cleared by Henry the Eighth when he built Nonsuch Palace—cleared of population, that is, of houses, cottages, and churches. There is a kind of lost parish about here, a mere wandering name, in the way of Cuddington, where manor-house, church, and village all disappeared to make room for Nonsuch. And now the Palace is gone like the village, and has left not a wrack behind.

Nearer Ewell is the site of the Palace itself, the wonder of its age.

This which no equal has in art or fame,
Britons deservedly do None-such name.

A wonder in plaster and wood-work, with turrets and pinnacles, and adorned with statues, waterworks, and all kinds of strange devices. Henry the Eighth did not live to see his Palace finished, but Elizabeth liked the place, it seems, and often stayed there—notably on the occasion when the Earl of Essex was received there when he came back from Ireland without leave, and was so badly received that he presently rebelled, and suffered. In after times, the Palace was neglected and abandoned till Charles gave it away to Lady Castlemaine, who broke it up and sold it for building materials.

But by this time, Epsom itself is below us, with its cluster of red roofs; a town that is best described by the epithet "neat"; what special character it has being due to its wide, open High Street, a market place rather than a street, with its modern market cross in the way of the clock-tower. But it is in its expansive little suburbs that Epsom is most pleasing: little settlements, scattered here and there in corners and by road-sides; red roofs spreading out under wider spreading elms; a morsel of common; a pond where Mother Goose majestically struts with her brood of goslings; and cottages where flowers seem to sprout and blossom with the smallest amount of cultivation. The way to the Downs is always pleasant, except perhaps in the choking dust of a Derby day; but there is no dust to-day, only sunshine delicately filtered through the leaves. The birds are singing bravely, a sustained chorus from the old ancestral groves in the background with soloists warbling and flourishing from the blackthorn hedge, while the deep caw of the rooks breaks in with harmonious discord. There is the soft tinkle of the sheep-bell too as the flock is spread along the road-side, seeking tender morsels in the hedge-banks.

The red-brick, Hanoverian-looking mansion—quaintly sequestered and yet close to everywhere: to the course; to the town; to the mill; to the stables with their neat rows of loose boxes like almshouses; to the paddocks, where the brood mares are just turned out and are sniffing the fresh grass, while their foals stilt delicately at their sides; the sweetest of spots, for one who loves both town and country, horses and humanity—is Durdans; and the

old ancestral groves are in Woodcote Park. Durdans, an old writer says, Aubrey perhaps—but in old writers we need not go behind Manning and Bray in that monumental history of theirs in which everything seems bottled up—Durdans itself was built up of the materials of old Nonsuch Palace. Now to a cursory view, it seems built of the ruddiest of red bricks; and then we find that old Durdans was burnt down and with it the last relics of Nonsuch, and the present building has only suggestions of Prince Fred, who inhabited it in the days of his dissensions with his peppery, apoplectic papa.

At that time Woodcote was owned by Lord Baltimore, the Prince's favourite companion. Lord Baltimore's ancestor had been a favourite too of King James and King Charles, and had received a grant of all Newfoundland, and as that, although an extensive estate, was not so profitable as might have been expected, the district now known as Maryland was thrown in. And, while this noble Lord took his title from an obscure town in County Longford, Ireland, the chief town of Maryland, now with its two hundred and fifty thousand or so of inhabitants, was called Baltimore in his honour.

As for Prince Fred's Lord Baltimore, there is a kind of human interest about him too; for we may remember a certain charming young widow, Mrs. Pendarves, who was afterwards Mrs. Delaney, and as such dimly apparent in memoirs and literary chronicles of the period. Now Mrs. Pendarves fascinated John Wesley in his youth, and he would gladly have married her no doubt, and, with an accomplished and well-connected woman of the world for his wife, would probably have risen rapidly in the Church; might have become Dean, Bishop, Archbishop even, but not the founder of a new religious movement. But all this was prevented by the fair widow's strong attachment to Lord Baltimore, who seems to have trifled with her affections and to have married someone else.

The son of this Lord Baltimore was a terrible scoundrel, and made Woodcote a by-word in the neighbourhood. He narrowly escaped the hangman's rope as a righteous penalty for his misdeeds, having brutally and forcibly abducted a pretty and innocent City maiden. But, although acquitted on his trial, he could no more show his face in the country, and sold everything and went abroad. With him, this not

highly distinguished line came to an end, with nothing left but a monument or two in the parish church to show that they ever existed.

When we have passed by the shades of Woodcote we are on the verge of the Downs itself. Dark against the sky, as you top the hill, rises the well-known outline of the Rubbing House, as it is called, a name that suggests the ancient practice of racing in heats, and the vigorous rubbing that was required to bring the poor beasts up to the starting post again. Now it is a public-house, where internal lotions alone are administered; but this is the point which, seen from the neighbouring hill on the great days of the Epsom calendar, seems to throb and palpitate with life as all the hosts with horses and chariots burst forth upon the Downs. The stands, white and glittering, are thrown out with strange lurid effect against a dark mass of stormy clouds, and there is something in the wild sweep of Downs that is at once savage and imposing, notwithstanding all the congress of booths, and stands, and hoardings, and railings that encumber the ground. The summit of the semicircular ridge that forms the racecourse is so broad and level that it must have suggested races to the least civilised of the ancient inhabitants of our island. There is the happy circumstance, too, of the hill that rises within the compass of the semicircle and affords a prospect of the whole course, and the ravine, whose commencement is just marked on the rim of the course, gives the gentle up and down so trying to horses as they turn the bend towards the winning-post. From the crest of the hill, occupied by the Grand Stand, a marvellous panoramic view is extended, that is, when it is to be seen at all. But the country towards London is generally clothed in a confused kind of vapour, and all the vast crowded region of palaces and hovels, domes and towers, is seen only darkly here and there.

On this grand plateau racing, as we have seen, has been going on for centuries; but it is only since 1730 that meetings have been held regularly each year at an appointed time. The week before Whitsuntide became generally known as the appointed time for the popular gathering, except under certain conditions of the calendar, when it was held a fortnight later. Then the races began at eleven a.m., and soon after one p.m. the whole assemblage adjourned to the town to dine and smoke, and discuss the events of the morning, and

regulate the bets and stakes for the sports of the afternoon, which were then brought to a leisurely conclusion.

It is not easy to trace the developement of the racehorse as he now exists, with his length of stride, and muscular strength combined with lightness of frame and vast going power. Many of his best qualities he owes, no doubt, to the original strain of Arab blood that is in him, derived from the Darley and Godolphin Arab, the Byerley Turk, and other noted sires of the early racing era; but these qualities are combined with others derived from many varieties of the choicest European strains, the result of the persistent selection of generations of enthusiastic breeders, greedy of fame and, perhaps, a little of guineas.

Among the earliest of these scientific breeders of horses was "Butcher" Cumberland, the hero of Culloden, who reared the best horse of his, or perhaps any period, the magnificent Eclipse, "built i' the eclipse," or rather foaled, during the portentous darkness of the great solar eclipse of 1764. Cumberland sold Eclipse as a colt to one Wildman for forty-six guineas, and Colonel O'Kelly bought the horse subsequently for one thousand seven hundred guineas. Never beaten, never touched by whip or spur, the magnificent chestnut ran a short but glorious career upon the turf, and then retired to the stud, where he proved a fortune to his owner, and became the sire of the best horses of succeeding times.

For some years Eclipse and his less distinguished owner lived at Epsom, where Colonel Kelly occupied a house on Clay-hill. Eclipse Cottage is still in existence to preserve the memory of the famous horse, whose hoof set in silver is one of the precious insignia of the Jockey Club. When Colonel O'Kelly left Epsom for Cannons, a carriage was specially built to convey the horse to his new quarters. At that time the notion of a horse driving in his carriage instead of drawing it himself, was a novelty to the public, and crowds thronged to see the triumphal progress of the favourite. He was as good as he was swift and beautiful, without a particle of vice in his composition, and with his head out of his carriage window Eclipse benignantly surveyed, and seemed to give his parting blessing to, the crowd.

While Eclipse still walked the earth, or was transported triumphantly thereupon, one of the worthies of the turf, Edward Smith Stanley, twelfth Earl of Derby.

began his racing career. This was in 1776, an epoch which may well be called ancient in the annals of the turf, while Lord Derby's death in Plenipo's year, or in the chronology of every-day life, A.D. 1834, was an event which may be remembered by many yet living men.

It was Lord Stanley's friend, General Burgoyne, who first brought him to the neighbourhood of Epsom. They had been old school-fellows at Westminster, and were staunch friends through life. The General's military career had finished disastrously at Saratoga Springs, with the surrender of his army to the Americans; his official and political career had been put an end too by Royal disfavour with the loss of all his appointments. It was then that he sold the Oaks, which had been previously a public house, and which the General had converted into a snug little sporting-box, to his friend. An excellent fellow was Burgoyne, a man of many parts, a wit and dramatist with a light happy touch, that might have made his fortune in these days of a not too serious drama. A bright little trifle called the Maid of the Oaks, performed with success by his Majesty's servants at Old Drury, was suggested by the fête—the fête champêtre as it was then called—held at the Oaks to celebrate the marriage of Lord Stanley and Lady Betty Hamilton. In 1779, Lord Derby, as he had now become, inaugurated the first year of the Oaks Stakes, called after his little house on the Downs, by winning them—the Stakes that is—with his filly Bridget. The Derby Stakes were instituted in the year following and called after his popular Lordship, and the first Derby was won by Sir Charles Bunbury, with his Diomed, on the fourth of May, 1780.

The Oaks, as it now exists, lies about half-way between Epsom and Croydon, near Woodmansterne village, above which the Downs rise to their greatest height in this part of the county. After Lady Betty's death Lord Derby, it will be remembered, married Miss Farren, the actress; and on the death of his friend Burgoyne, who left not a sixpence behind him, he took charge of his children, and brought them up at the Oaks, and the eldest boy turned out a gallant soldier, and died not so many years ago a Field-Marshal and General, Sir John Fox Burgoyne.

Having brought Epsom races into the modern field, their further history is rather

a matter for the historian of the Turf than for a Rambler by the way. But old turfites will recall the great scandal of Running Rein's year, 1844, when the winner was proved not to be himself at all, but a horse a year older, and was disqualified, and the stakes awarded to the second horse.

If we turn our backs to the Grand Stand and the noise and tumult of the racecourse, we see the ravine that begins at Tattenham Corner widening out and deepening, and leading into the thick of a quiet, pleasant country, where the spire of Headley Church stands out as a beacon visible for miles around. And this way, when races are on, come a stream of people from Sussex and Hampshire. There is a regular pilgrim track over the Downs; country yokels, with shining, rosy faces, brown and nimble-tongued men from Hants, who, whatever their general avocations may be, present a compact and horsey appearance to the eye; scarlet and blue from Aldershot; and a Jack Tar or two from Portsmouth. All the last part of the way the great white stand and its towers, beginning to be speckled with human ants, shine out as landmark and guide. The cottagers have turned out and have spread tables under the trees, with ginger beer, and bread and cheese, and home-made pie. There was an old man, some years ago, who sat under some noble beeches by Walton Down watching the petty traffic carried on by his grandchildren, who used to tell how, for more than seventy years, he had come out to watch the Derby people go by, but had never been over the hill to see the race, although the noise and turmoil of the course could be heard from where he sat.

Few who visit Epsom think of its once-celebrated wells, the mineral springs that supplied the once-famed Epsom salts, the sulphate of magnesia, once sold at five shillings an ounce, but now manufactured by the ton—for dosing cotton cloth, and not human beings, fortunately. The wells lie on Epsom Common, which is of a clayey and tenacious nature, and an evil place to be caught in a downpour of rain, for there is not a tree or a bush to shelter under; but, as its chief frequenters are ducks and geese, this does not so much matter. Of the little pleasure town that grew up about the wells there is not a vestige. Ball-rooms, taverns, family-hotels, dancing-booths, gaming-booths, all have vanished. A new house has been built upon the site of the centre of all the gaiety

of old times, and within an outhouse the wells still give forth their once-renowned waters—proudly advertised as containing four hundred and eighty grains of calcareous nitre to the gallon, thirty-six more than Acton, one hundred and eighty more than Pancras, three hundred and four more than Holt, and two hundred and eighty more than the Dog and Duck, St. George's Fields!

But these envious rivals, too, have vanished from the field, although they were in full swing when Burgoyne wrote the *Maid of the Oaks*, from the Prologue to which we may quote :

Now Marybone shines forth in gaping crowds !
Now Highgate glitters from her hill of clouds !
St. George's Fields, with taste and fashion struck,
Display Arcadia at the Dog and Duck.

"THAT DAY IN JUNE."

Ah, love ! do you remember ?—sweet old phrase,
For twilight hours, and fire-enlightened gloom,
That seem to people all the shaded room
With forms and faces from a long dead past ;
And through all, like the key-note of some tune,
Come back the dreams of one fair day in June !

Dear love ! don't you remember how the moss
Curled golden green about our shaded seat ?
How ferns and flowers clustered at your feet ?
How rang the birds' full-throated melody ?
That peaceful, lovely, perfect summer noon,
Whence dates our lives : for we loved first in June.

Ah, love ! do you remember ?—filling eyes
With joyful tears ; yet since that sweet day died,
Many and bitter are the tears you've cried,
Many the furrows on your dear white brow !
Yet in mine arms, I cannot deem that soon
Faded the radiance of that day in June.

Nay, 'tis not faded, darling ; but 'tis strange
How all our loving cannot banish death !
We were so young then ; now the winter's breath
Shrivels and pinches where the blood once coursed,
Leaping with rapture ; o'er the fire we croon,
And scarce believe that once we loved in June !

Dear love, always remember ; years pass on,
Mingle with dust, and leave but little mark ;
The light burns lower, nearer comes the dark.
Yet 'twill not matter, if still lives our love,
E'en in the night our lives shall have their moon—
The fair remembrance of that day in June !

MY FRIEND CROCKER.

"You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

This is one of those blossoms of imagination wherewith old-fashioned people—otherwise guiltless, and even disdainful of anything like a flight of fancy—are wont to deck their discourse ; and its general meaning I take to be that you cannot expect a gracious action from an ungracious person : the silk purse standing for some fruit or other of one of the

Christian virtues, and the sow's ear for a person placed, let us say, considerably nearer to Caliban than to Crichton in the human hierarchy.

In this matter, as in most others, I fear the public estimate is prone to be biassed by external considerations, and to demand a pound of moral worth to atone for a grain of boorishness.

"My dear, there is nothing that helps one on so much as making a favourable first impression. Mrs. Dunham, the new Vicar's wife, was quite right to wear that real cashmere when she made her first call, though she may have borrowed it from her aunt, as Miss Sharpe declares she did."

I remember hearing these words from a venerable old lady, as harmless as a dove, and certainly as wise as a serpent ; and ever since I have had a profound appreciation of the importance of dazzling and captivating the world's eye at once. Many things will be forgiven him who never treads on a corn, or commits a solecism, or makes an ugly exhibition of himself generally.

My friend Crocker is certainly one of the most disagreeable men it has ever been my fortune, or my misfortune, to meet. Whenever I come across him, his manner gives me the impression that something must just have happened to put him in a bad temper. If I remark that it is a fine day, he replies that he has got a particular pain in his right shoulder, which always precedes a thunderstorm ; and if I say that it is an unpleasant day, he will tell me that to-morrow will be much worse.

And yet Fortune has dealt no blows at Crocker, to sour his nature and convert him into a sort of vulgar Timon. After a youth and prime well spent in distributing the common necessities of life, he enjoys his ease in his villa at Upper Clapton ; a pleasure-house, built after his own design, and surrounded by all the accessories dear to the heart of the citizen freed from his duties. He has a roomy four-wheeled chaise, and a horse which never falls lame when he is most wanted, as the horses of retired citizens have a common trick of doing. His Jersey cows give the thickest of cream, and his garden the juiciest of strawberries and pears. His house suits him perfectly, though to me it is the "amari aliquid" in the sweets of fortune surrounding him. Nobody but Crocker could have built such a house, and yet he had as pretty a six-acre meadow, as any to be found in all the home counties, to begin upon.

To paraphrase the epigram spoken concerning a witty but immoral gentleman of the last century, one might say that nothing but such a house could deform such a landscape, and that nothing but such a landscape could render such a house endurable. It is built of sulphur-coloured white brick, with dressings of red ditto up the angles and round the windows. The roof is covered with the most uncomplaining and hideous steely-gray slate. It stands four-square, a perfect cube, with a small excrescence at the back devoted to the scullery, and on to one side is tacked a conservatory, which, with its adornments of blue, and red, and ground glass, is probably the most hideous thing on the premises.

Crocker, like most other disagreeable persons, is a man of strong opinions; and, having built his house to please himself, he is firmly convinced that it is the most desirable residence in England. Whenever he takes me for an afternoon drive in the roomy chaise along the lanes—once country, but now suburbanised out of all knowledge—he pours out the vials of his sarcastic wit over the stupid fools who have wasted their money over the gewgaw rubbish, which he scornfully designates here and there by a wave of his driving whip. The “Domestic Gothic” structures of twenty years ago, the “Queen Anne” villas of to-day, he condemns outright. “Now, if that man had been satisfied with plain brickwork he might have saved twenty per cent. on his outlay, and had just as good a house; and if he ain’t a fool, I’d like to know where you’d find one.”

He is of opinion that all men under five-and-thirty are “whipper-snappers,” who ought to keep themselves discreetly in the background, speaking when they are spoken to, and listening respectfully to the discourse of himself and others equally worshipful—himself especially. I have known him now for nearly twenty years, my hair is getting grey and thin too; but I never make a statement in Crocker’s presence without a qualm, for he has always exercised upon me most generously his powers of snubbing and putting down ever since I was first introduced to him. Anything in the shape of a figure of speech acts upon him as a scarlet umbrella affects a turkey-cock, and I confess I am often tempted to get petulant and snappish with him in our discourse on occasions when we may have travelled beyond the limits of the identical proposition. I may

here remark that the identical proposition in the familiar saying, that a spade ought to be called a spade and not an implement of iron and wood compounded for the purpose of digging, holds high rank in Crocker’s list of aphorisms. It is rather hard to have all one’s flights of fancy swept into a heap, and ticketed “nonsense” by a man whose aspirates—but, hold, enough! I will not be mean enough to canvass the peculiarities, results of a neglected education, of a man who, in my days of early struggle, lent me that fifty pounds which enabled me to snap my fingers in the face of the Sheriff of Middlesex. I admit I am always sorry for my ill-temper five minutes after I have transgressed, for, after all, it is as reasonable to be irritated with such a man for not appreciating my tropes and metaphors as to chide him for not being six feet high.

It is not Crocker’s fault that in the course of a meritorious commercial career he has acquired the habit of looking at things as they are, and not as they might be; of expecting a due correspondence between bulk and sample; of taking now and then a careful inventory; and dealing on no system which will not stand the test of a rigorous audit. Crocker, in short, talks, and thinks, and reasons—as he formerly retailed colonial produce—on a strict system of double entry.

After saying so much it will be hardly necessary for me to set down the fact that Crocker is a utilitarian of the deepest dye. I have never dared to call him one, for were I to do so I am sure I should be met with the rebuke that he was a grocer—a retired grocer if I liked, but a grocer for all that, and nothing else. Amongst his other failings, Crocker is undeniably purseproud. But suddenly the question suggests itself to me, why is purse pride worse than other pride? It is the exaltation of the conqueror over the spoils of victory, and nothing else. The successful grocer has prevailed over the combined forces of the retail buyer and the wholesale seller. He has wrung from them the tribute due, and marches off in triumph to enjoy the repose of peace at Upper Clapton.

We do not gibe at the soldier who carries his medals on his breast with conscious pride, so let us be a little tolerant to Crocker’s self-gratulation over his stocks, and shares, and comfortable balance at the bankers. But however charitably we regard this weakness in theory, there is no doubt that practically Crocker is not

very pleasant company when he gets upon this particular hobby. When one is despairingly conscious that the water-rate falls due to-morrow, and that the tradesmen are waxing insolent, it is not soothing music to hear, metaphorically, the continual chink of the sovereigns in the breeches pockets of others. Somewhat in the spirit of the fox under the grape vine, I begin to speculate whether unlimited cash is such a wonderful blessing after all; whether I—a man with five children, deriving a fairly good though precarious income from connection with the public press—may not possess a store of wealth, in the shape of a lively imagination and a poetic temperament, worth all Crocker's much vaunted belongings put together. It is when I venture to advance a proposition of this sort that we come the nearest to an open rupture. Crocker refuses altogether to admit that there can be any value in anything one cannot touch, or taste, or handle, or that the pleasures of the imagination, about which I am constantly dropping hints, have any real existence. When I venture to remark in a delicate way that those people who regard only the practical side of life miss half the joy of living, Crocker will either preserve a contemptuous silence, or reply by asking me point-blank whether I have discovered a way of paying a butcher's bill which is other than practical. One day, I remember, I went down with Crocker to see the Bushy chestnuts, then in their full beauty. I never understood how it was that I succeeded in beguiling him to take a journey in search of the picturesque, and as long as I discoursed on the wonderful beauty of the trees Crocker kept a disdainful silence. When, however, I went one step further, and affirmed that no amount of money could represent the value of the pleasure given year by year by the flowering of this lovely grove, I roused the spirit of the British tradesman.

"How could one appraise," I asked, "the sum of wealth represented by the delight given every spring to the thousands and thousands of Nature-lovers, cooped up in London, by the sight of these big mountains of flower and foliage, ever the same yet ever new, and lying within the reach of everyone with a few hours to spare, and pence enough to pay the fare of the river steamer?"

Crocker let me go on with my rhapsody, and I found he was evidently on the "qui vive," and taking note of what I was saying,

for he began to figure and make calculations on the back of an old envelope. At last, when the stream of my eloquence had dried up, he said:

"Now just look 'ere. Anything as is worth anything 'll find it's way into the rate-book, some way or other, and be rated accordingly. Can you find this here pleasure, as you make so much fuss about, rated to any parish hereabouts? You can't. I didn't think you could. Now I calls the place just waste ground, and nothin' else. Cut down the trees; sell the timber and invest the proceeds; let the ground on buildin' leases, or for market gardens, and apply rent and interest of ditto to help to pay the school-rate. Then I'll agree with these bein' a real walloo in the place. I once had a counterman as was allus a runnin' down 'ere o' Whit Mondays, and what profit he got out o' the chestnuts I don't know, seein' as he left just enough to bury him, and I did hear arterwards as his widder had to go to the wurkur."

After what I have written above there can be little doubt, I fear, that Crocker must be set down as a Yahoo, a Philistine of the most pronounced character, the distilled and concentrated essence of all that is most odious in the British vestryman, the most unfavourable material, in short, out of which the silk purse—still keeping up the metaphor—could be manufactured; in other words, a sow's ear, and nothing else.

Crocker, however, has in no way suffered moral shipwreck. As a father, a husband, a citizen, his record is spotless; he is by no means a Helot, to be exhibited as a warning to our younglings; but he, hapless wight, has had the ill-luck to flaunt all his imperfections in the face of the world; and, as I remarked in the beginning, he will have to furnish a huge mass of probity to overshadow and banish from sight these affronting traits, which doubtless spring from some digestive derangement rather than any internal depravity. And now it will be my pleasing duty, by way of falsifying the maxim which stands at the head of this paper, to show what progress Crocker has made in heaping up his expiatory pile of good works; how far Crocker, in his private life, differs from Crocker the lord and master of the villa at Upper Clapton.

I have already alluded, in passing, to a slight pecuniary service formerly done to me by Crocker: and I will at once let it

be known that this service, in itself no inconsiderable one, does not represent a tithe of the practical benefits I have received from my porcupine-like friend. He is godfather to my eldest boy, Ebenezer Thomas—Ebenezer, after Crocker; Thomas, after my wife's uncle, Bullifant, late Mayor of Coggeshall, Essex—and it is owing to his sponsor's beneficence that Ebenezer wears the becoming uniform and studies the humanities and mathematics at Christ's Hospital. Some years ago, when my foot was by no means assured in the world of letters, the sub-editorship of the "Provision Dealers' Gazette" became vacant, and, through Crocker's interest, the post was offered to me. The emolument in itself was small; but it was large enough relatively to augment my income by a considerable percentage.

The nature of the work, it is true, was hardly sympathetic to a man who possessed, stowed away at home, or on their dreary pilgrimage from their birthplace to this and that Editor and back, two three-volume novels, a tragedy, a volume of poems and translations, and a series of character sketches after the manner of Thackeray. The present value of these literary treasures however, was, at this period, nil, and the void in the domestic exchequer was a grim reality; so I put my pride in my pocket and buckled to my sub-editorial duties. I could soon talk glibly enough about Gouda cheese, Waterford mild-cured bacon, and Cork and Holstein butter. I stuck to my post for two years, at the end of which period the provision dealers discovered that they could get on very well without a gazette of their own, so they turned their plant and offices over to a serious weekly, then just started, and discharged their staff without granting any pensions.

I believe that Crocker regarded me as a very ill-used man in this matter, and that his conscience pricked him because I had, through his counsel, accepted an appointment which promised to be permanent, but proved rather short-lived. Anyhow, he set to work to influence a friend of his in Drogheda, a rich bacon and butter merchant, who was also part proprietor of the East Tipperary Advertiser; and the end of it was that I was commissioned to supply a weekly London letter to the journal above-named. I began my new engagement with a light heart, for it was one much more to my taste than had been the chronicling the fluctuations of the provision market. I put my whole soul into my work; and now

sometimes, when I read over certain of my earlier effusions, I wonder how I found courage to put down on paper the astounding statements which I sent over as gospel truth for perusal in East Tipperary. It seemed as if I must have seen every new piece that came out at every theatre; that I had only to go down to Westminster and send in my card to summon whatever Minister I might wish to see out of the House, and either learn from his lips what was to be the direction of public affairs for the next week, or give him a few hints as to certain measures which the Empire as a whole, and East Tipperary in particular, would like to see put in the statute book without delay. I was hand-in-glove with most of the leaders of society, and able to speak, seemingly at first hand, in familiar terms of the Duke of Paddington's grand dinner in Grosvenor Square, and Lady Edgeware's last reception. My London letter soon became known beyond the limits of East Tipperary; and I was asked to furnish a like one for a Wesh journal, and another for a paper in the Eastern Counties. My pen has never been idle since, so I am justified, I think, in regarding Crocker as the founder of my fortunes, such as they are.

I learnt not long ago, by accident, that the widow of the luckless counterman—whose predilection for Bushy and its chestnuts had so militated against his commercial success—the bereaved female of whom Crocker remarked that "he heard she had to go the works," did not long remain a charge upon the rates. Crocker was soon to the front, and did not do his alms as certain great houses and corporations are in the habit of doing in like cases, giving a mangle, and a sovereign by way of working capital. In a certain suburb, the residential element seemed to be outgrowing the retail traders; and Crocker, with a keen eye to such matters, hired a house, stocked it with all the wonderful wares which go to make a "Berlin Wool Repository," and installed Mrs. Williams to distribute the same. The business grew and prospered, Mrs. Williams is now trading entirely on her own account, and if you make a purchase at her establishment, I will wager that you will not retrace her threshold without first hearing a full account of Crocker and his good works. Mrs. Williams indeed is, in a way, a thorn in the flesh to her benefactor, for he is not one of that class who do their alms to be seen of men. As he goes about the world,

growling at this and grumbling at that, I believe he is always on the look-out for an opportunity to do a good turn to somebody; but he is terribly put out if the world should get wind of his benevolence, and he himself be forced to run the gauntlet of grateful speeches and admiring looks; and this is his inevitable fate whenever Mrs. Williams may happen to catch sight of him. To her, Crocker is a purse of the finest silk, though I am bound to say he never fails to flap the sow's ear in her face, in the most uncompromising manner, whenever they may meet.

This question of silk purses may, likewise, be considered in a reverse process, by going through one's list of acquaintances, and seeing whether it does not contain several names belonging to people who are made, if the worthless verdict of superficial observation be trusted, of the finest silk—people who seldom contradict and never offend; who, when you are in their society, have a way of making you feel that you stand on a level far higher than their own, and that you are, probably, superior to nine-tenths of the human race. But the work of art is not perfect. The hidden deformities are not entirely concealed. By a sudden movement the chaplet of roses is disturbed, and one may catch a glimpse of the ugly thing that lies beneath; in an unguarded moment, Nature reasserts herself, and amid soft accents and pleasant words one may hear an unmistakeable grunt.

Still, with a full knowledge that things are not altogether what they seem to be, I am not sure that, if I had just lost a large sum of money, or had been crossed in love, I should not prefer the society of one of this sort—though I might have grave doubts as to the sincerity of the individual—to an afternoon's drive with Crocker in the roomy chaise. But when the pinch comes, when resolute action and self-sacrifice are called for in place of soft petting and gentle cooing words; then, too often it is made manifest that the silk will neither wash nor wear. It will be fortunate, indeed, if the imperfections all turn out to be of a negative character; if one is not made aware, in unpleasant wise, that the porcine nature is in active working beneath the surface of the delicate silken exterior. These are they who will root up your choicest flowers and fruit trees when your back is turned, and perchance will turn and rend you unawares.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL this time has the modest clerk been left journeying on his way to Fulham, carrying with him to his suburban quarters a bundle of very unwonted sensations—seeing visions in the dusky November night, travelling long mental stages into new experiences, while his body was being whirled through lighted streets and unlit outskirts to its nightly destination.

As for the forward clerk, this history knows nothing of him. Doubtless, when he had eaten his portion of pie and of cake, and drunk his draught of tea, he went his way to the gallery of a theatre, to a smoking concert, or to some other haunt of mild dissipation. Not so John Temple. John Temple went home, when the bank released him, to Fulham and his sister Jessie. Not that he did not love a good play—tragedy, comedy, or melodrama—as well, in his quiet way, as anybody else. The jokes were not lost upon him; the tragic situations hit his weak point quite unerringly; he heartily loved his pipe and a good song; but above all things he loved most to do what other people expected of him; and his sister Jessie—Jessie, the ailing invalid, the exacting sufferer—listened for the sound of his key in the latch as regularly as the clock struck six.

Everybody called him John; he had never been Johnnie even in pinafore days, and it would indeed have suited ill with his six feet, his broad shoulders, and his brown, pointed beard. His cousin, Fred Temple, sometimes called him Jack; but it showed a singular want of discernment in that clever young man, for there was nothing of Jack about him. He was John all over; John in his serene gravity; John in his happy acquiescence in being let alone, and neglected, and not wanted; John in his readiness to come forward when there was a disagreeable task to perform, a piece of sad news to break, a friend to help out of a scrape.

Fulham is, no doubt, a very desirable place in the eyes of the people who live in its handsome houses, and go to garden parties at the Palace; indeed, to judge by the novelists, a villa at Fulham is a goal to be arrived at by aspiring young couples. But there is a side of

Fulham which is not at all aristocratic; a Fulham of the humbler clerk; a Fulham of villas so named by courtesy, that cling in close array side by side, and are poky and airless, and yet abound in draughts—where to enter the dining-room with dignity you must first back into the kitchen; where, in no corner whatsoever can you escape the all-pervading, unrelenting odour of cooking. Cooking in these little dwellings seems to go on all day, all the week, all the year round: the bacon of the morning mingles with the stew of midday, and melts finally into the Welsh rarebit of supper.

When John Temple went home on a night that was memorable to him, the odour of toasted cheese came out to him even before he walked up the tiny flagged path to the door. It seemed to rush at him with reproach.

"You are late," it said. "You are very late; you have kept me waiting to be eaten; you have flushed your sister Jessie's face; you have made her temples throb; you have tried her nerves and her temper, you have——"

Well, if the neglected supper did not say all this, Jessie Temple said it; said it in every line of her peevish face and accent of her voice; said it by the petulant action with which she threw off the kind hand that fell on her shoulder.

"I'm afraid I'm late, little woman," said John, deprecatingly. "You see I had a bit of an adventure that detained me; but I won't stop to tell it you now. I'll run up and wash my hands, and be with you in a minute."

"I don't see what is the use of having an early night if you are to be as late as usual, putting out all our calculations!" cried Jessie, unmollified by apology. "Sarah has been to the gate over and over again looking out for you; the supper will be quite spoiled."

"Supper, eh?" said John, oblivious for the moment of the cheese. Then he pulled himself up in time. To confess to the tea and the pie already enjoyed would but add to the cup of Jessie's tribulation. Better eat without an appetite than that.

"I won't be a minute," he said again; and he went off looking as if he must necessarily stoop his tall head to pass under the doorway. The little house never seemed such a ridiculous doll's house as when this big fellow was in it. It suited Jessie well enough. Jessie was small and fragile, and took but little space, and she

had no active, sprightly moods, no dancing impulses to make the furniture seem in the way and the ceiling too near the floor. She was only twenty; but she was already an old woman—old in suffering, old in disappointment, old even in looks, for her features, which were delicately cut, were pinched and drawn, and her eyes had an abiding, brooding sadness in their dark depths.

The girl whom John had met that night might be twenty also; no older than Jessie; but how unlike her in every respect save this! The wild-rose of that complexion; the blue of those shy, trustful eyes; the gold of that hair; the lightness of that springing step! John thought of them all as he came downstairs red and glowing with the vigour of his towelling. He had thought of little else, indeed, the whole way home; and while he was yet dwelling on those graces, yet mentally recalling that droop of the white lids that showed the dark lashes, that whimsical uplifting of the arched brows, that hand held out flutteringly and flutteringly withdrawn, his glance rested on Jessie stretched on the sofa, pale, sombre, and exhausted. Honest John Temple's heart smote him, and those wandering thoughts of his hovering round another burned in him like an infidelity.

He sat down by the couch and did what he could to make amends. It was not much, perhaps, but he did it without clumsiness. He punched the cushions, he shaded the light; he bathed Jessie's hot brow with eau-de-cologne; he fanned her with a Japanese fan which he reached with a long arm from the mantel-piece; and, finally, because he saw no other way of getting rid of the supper—still a bone of contention—he sat down and ate it. When the little maid had carried off the fragments, Jessie's amiability was in some measure restored.

"Well, what was the wonderful adventure?" she said grudgingly. "You haven't told me."

"No," said John. On the whole he would rather not have told it now. "Perhaps it won't seem much of an adventure to you."

"Perhaps not; very likely not; but I can't tell till I know what it was."

"Well, I met some people in—in a place where I was having some tea."

It was out now; it could no longer be hidden.

"Tea!" echoed Jessie, with a certain

languid contempt. "What a very healthy appetite you have, John!"

"You made me take supper," he said, feeling that this was a little too much to be borne in silence.

"Of course," she said impatiently. "Do you think I was going to let it be wasted when it was cooked on purpose for you? But do go on. You are so slow! You met some people. What kind of people?"

"An old Scotch fellow and his niece."

"How do you know she was his niece?"

"She called him uncle."

Did he not remember every word of the few words she had uttered?

"Well, then, how do you know he was Scotch?"

"That," said John with a smile, "was manifest from the outset. The North Briton cannot disguise himself. Even if there is not that in his gait, in the length of his upper lip, in the prominence of his cheek-bone, in the shrewdness of his eye, which betrays him, he has but to open his mouth and the secret is out. Scotch people never lose their native accent. I believe you and I may be discovered to retain a trace of it from our ancestors. This old fellow had not only the tongue, he had the hair and complexion of his race."

Now, this was a long speech for John. Jessie looked at him sharply while he uttered it. She was suspicious, as sick people often are; and she was observant, as they also often are, having but a narrow world to scan. Did John want to conceal anything behind this drapery of words?

"Was the girl Scotch too?" she asked. With Jessie, conversation partook of the nature of a catechism.

"I believe so. I should say so."

"Had she a long upper lip, and high cheek bones, and red hair, and a freckled skin?" she demanded relentlessly, turning on her pillow to gaze at him.

"No, she had not; she certainly had not——" he almost stumbled over the words in the eagerness of his denial. "She spoke with a marked accent. They lost their way," he hurried on, "that is, they did not know it, being strangers, and I was able to show it them. There, you have the whole affair—not much of an adventure after all, you see." He was quite eager she should not regard it as much of an adventure.

"Where did they want to go?" asked Jessie, who had not quite concluded her examination.

"To Prince's Gate."

"Do they know someone there?"

"I believe so. A Mrs. Popham, I think. An odd name, isn't it? Nothing Scotch about it, nor about ours either, for the matter of that."

"Considering our father was an Englishman, I don't think there's anything so very wonderful in that," said Jessie with contempt.

"To be sure. It was our mother who was Scotch. What was our mother's maiden name, do you remember?"

"Do I remember?" echoed Jessie tartly. "It would be rather odd if I didn't. It is rather odd that you don't, if you don't, seeing that I am her namesake."

"To be sure!" cried John again. "I was a fool to forget it;" but his pulses gave an onward throb and his dark face flushed as he spoke, for Jessie's name was—Jessie Burton Temple.

"I think you are very stupid to-night," she complained, "and if that was all your adventure, it was not worth being late for and keeping Sarah and me wondering if you had been run over, or upset, or something, and the tea overdrawn, and the toast burned to a cinder. Of course if you will be late, you must take the consequences."

"The consequences were not so very serious, for me, anyhow; I did very well," said John patiently, the more patiently because of his inward compunction. He had forgotten Jessie; he had forgotten everything—everything but the glances of those blue eyes, the smiles of those sweet lips.

"Shall I read a bit?" he asked cheerfully. The room was very hot; he would rather have been outside pacing the street at this its quietest hour, when the children were abed, and the organ-grinders, street-singers, the itinerant vendors, had at last ceased from troubling—out in the coolness, smoking his pipe under the watchful stars and thinking.

But John Temple was the last man to do a thing just because it was pleasant to himself; that was no reason, he would have said, and truly he would have believed it to be none.

He drew the evening paper from his pocket and read out all the more thrilling portions of intelligence, the scraps that are concocted to whet an appetite jaded by the labours of the day. The room was dark as well as hot, for the lamp was shaded to shield Jessie's eyes. He had to bend close to the printed page. It was a good face

the lamp illuminated—a kind, manly, and patient face; and it was a pleasant, quiet voice that filled the little room, but Jessie thought of neither, used as she was to both. She only felt in all her quivering nerves the rustle and crackle of the paper as he turned it in his hand, seeking out the most appetising morsels for her. At last she could bear it no longer, and she asked him, almost commanded him, petulantly to put it away.

To a less sound and wholesome nature Jessie's caprices would have been unendurable. She was "trying," as women say—a woman would probably have found her petulance insupportable. Women, who find an infinite indulgence for the other sex, and who will nurse and coddle the colds and coughs and headaches of their menkind with a quite shameless partiality, are much more severe towards each other. A sister, had Jessie had one, would very likely have scolded her, probably with bracing effect; but John, being a man—and a big, strong, healthy man—had a giant's compassion and pitying tenderness for this poor little woman's ails and aches. He was the more sorry, perhaps, because he could not understand, because he had never had so much as a headache himself, and very seldom indeed a grudging or an angry thought.

He tried a book next, turning the leaves with elaborate caution. How was he to guess that his very care, his anxiety to make no sound, tortured her as the rustle of the paper had not tortured her? How was he to know that she could not take in the sense of what he read, for listening, straining her ear, waiting in suspense for the faint fall of the leaf? Will he do it quietly—more quietly this time? Shall I hear or not hear it? One has to go through a long apprenticeship of sickness which leaves shattered nerves and a diseased sensibility behind it to understand all this.

John, in happy ignorance, read on steadily for a while—for a space during which a new suspicion came to harass and distress the sufferer on the sofa.

Suddenly Jessie got up.

"I am going to bed," she said.

"I think you'd better," he acquiesced, after a second's pause of astonishment at being pulled up thus short in the middle of a sentence; "I am sure you are very tired to-night. I'm afraid you don't find this story interesting."

"I find it as interesting as you do," she

said dryly; "quite as interesting. Perhaps I could even tell better what it was all about. Well, what was it about?"

"Eh?" he stammered, and looked confused. He turned to the back of the volume, and stared at it as if for inspiration:

"Well," he said, gathering confidence, "it is a love-story, you know. That's what most novels are, I suppose. We'd have come to the interesting bit if you had had a little patience."

"A little fiddlestick!" said Jessie with contempt. "As if you could deceive me. I've been looking at you—I've been watching you—you've been thinking about that girl all the time. Why didn't you say she was pretty!" she demanded, turning on him at the door. "Do you think it matters to me? Do you think I care just because I am old before my time—old and faded, and ugly with sickness and trouble? Do you think I grudge her her good looks—her pink and white cheeks, her red lips, her light hair? Oh, I know—I know. If you do!" she menaced him breathlessly—"if you do——!"

"Jessie," said John, rallying from a confounded dumb silence that had stricken him at this accusation; "Jessie, my poor dear, let me carry you up stairs—you are quite worn out."

"No, thank you," she flashed a look of anger at him out of her sombre eyes, "I don't require your help; your 'poor dear' can walk up stairs, as she always does. She is thankful that that is left to her. It will be more to the purpose if you can spare a thought to put the chain on the door and turn out the lamp when you are ready to leave the room, unless you would like poor Sarah to do it for you!" And with this last small sting she left him, to toil feebly upstairs to her little room, and there to cry out her jealous, fretful heart in secret—left him to do all the repenting, to feel that he had somehow behaved like a brute and ruffian. How was it that, with the most blameless intentions, he always blundered?

Jessie had quite unerringly guessed the direction of his thoughts. While he was angry with himself for his neglect and forgetfulness of this poor little sister of his, he found a certain meed of admiration for her acuteness. It was clever of her to find out about this strange girl; and to describe her too, as if she had seen her!

"Pink and white," she had said; "red-lipped. How could Jessie think of that?"

There were never prettier lips made to smile; and the pink of those blushing cheeks was of the wild rose."

Oh, wise John, grave John, faithful brother John! You rate yourself one moment for the folly of your thoughts; and you but see the sin, to commit it again, to revel in it, to sit till the lamp burns low, with this same foolish fancy for your comrade.

Tilly, a nice little name, no longer than Jessie, but sweeter to the ear—a Tilly must needs be sprightly, gay, and smiling, with no lurking severities to repel. Tilly Burton! Odd that, very odd, and his mother a Burton too! Was Burton a common name on the Scottish border? Was it owned, for instance, by such a clan as the Joneses and the Smiths of England? What Smith would dream of claiming kindred with every other Smith who crossed his path? Did not the members of that overgrown family spell their joint surname in every conceivable fashion to escape the obligation of implied relationship? But Burton, there was but one way of spelling that, and you did not meet with it every day. You seldom met with it at all, unless on the label of the pale ale you took for lunch. There could be but one stem from which the branches sprang, and, starting with this premiss, to what other conclusion could you come but that the Burtons on this side of Tweed and on that must all be related—cousins in one degree of nearness or another, whether they knew it or not? A very pleasant conclusion, truly, when the cousin to be claimed is a young, pretty girl, who has—well, who has rather taken your fancy.

Temple set himself to try and recall all he knew and had heard of his mother, and he was surprised to find how little he did know. She had died when Jessie was a baby, and he vaguely knew that she had been ailing and melancholy. He tried vainly to recall her face, her manner, her ways; they had faded too hopelessly from his memory. He could revive no stories she had told him of her youth in her Northern home; nothing of her was left to him but a blurred, uncertain outline of a woman who had somehow missed happiness, and had, perhaps, died not unwillingly.

When he turned his thoughts to his father, he found them much more defined and precise. His father had outlived his mother a good many years, and they had been years of wretchedness, of unmitigated wretchedness. There was nothing to

soften the harshness of this judgement, no lighter gleams to relieve the black gloom of that downward-going path that ended mercifully in death. Remembering all this, it was not difficult to imagine that his mother might, with reason, have been unhappy.

John Temple, senior, had never at any time been successful—never done anything for anybody to be proud of. He had not got on, for instance, as his brother, the father of cousin Fred, had got on, and was, for the matter of that, getting on still. Only last year had he been summoned to attend the housekeeper at the Hall, where his predecessor never penetrated, and this very Christmas he had had the honour of examining the Earl's own tongue, of feeling his pulse, and taking his temperature; and if that has not a symptom of progression, when a man had already the health of half a county in his charge, of what, pray, does progress consist?

So in this very year of grace, Dr. Temple was trotting along the muddy country lanes on his fat nag; fat himself and smiling and complacent, feeling pulses and pocketing guineas, and "Fred, the young dog, was a Government servant, and swaggered about in swell London society, in quite tip-top society, if you please. No satisfying the rascal when he comes down here! I'm too old-fashioned for him, that I am," the doctor would say to a listening patient, mentioning casually with a shake of the head, that tried vainly to be dissatisfied and doubtful, that Fred had dined with the Honourable So-and-so last night, and was to lunch with my Lord Blank to-day. And John—honest John, whom nobody would have dreamed of calling a young dog—was plodding away in Jones's bank; and John's father was in his grave these fifteen years, and if anyone remembered him at all it was with a thankful conviction that he had gone where the wicked cease from troubling.

Even his son, who had quite a woman's tenderness of heart, tried to forget this unworthy parent as often as he could. It was easier to forget than to judge and condemn, since no summing up, however skilful, could pronounce him innocent. Sometimes Jessie reminded him of the father whom she could herself scarcely remember with distinctness. There was a look in the eye, a droop of the mouth, that awoke to sudden life a brood of ugly memories in him; but these never made him less tender to her; rather more. They

were but traits—inherited tricks. Jessie was a woman, and a suffering woman; thank Heaven! she could never be what their father had been.

Thus dwelling unwillingly on the past, leaving it gladly for the present, and mingling that, in the happy inconstancy of his thoughts, with the future, Temple kept wondering if he should ever see Tilly again, or rather, when he should see Tilly again; and how she was getting on with that Mrs. Popham, of the ridiculous name; and whether she had spoken of that tea in the Brompton Road? His thoughts might finally have been all of Tilly, if there had not suddenly flashed on him a remembrance of a bundle of old letters seen somewhere—where? when?—letters that were said to have been written by his mother. Here was a key to the mystery of her birth, could he but lay hands on it. He searched his memory vainly for a time, and then with one of those illuminations that sometimes happily light up the dark corners of the mind, he recalled the very spot where they were hidden.

It was in a secret recess of one of those old-fashioned escritaires which serve the double purpose of chest-of-drawers and desk. This was too large and clumsy a piece of furniture for any room in the little house, and it stood in the passage just outside Jessie's door. Only a slim Jessie could have slipped past it without danger to elbow or ankle; as for John, it was a terror to him every time he approached it. Suppose he fell against it, and woke Jessie out of that first sleep so precious to the invalid? Suppose the door, which slid back in a groove, should creak from long disuse? Suppose the recess refused to deliver its secret without protesting jerks and groans? His curiosity must have been keen indeed to surmount all these "supposes."

Like a thief he crept up the little stair and listened, candle in hand, outside Jessie's door. Reassured by the answering silence from within, he proceeded to divest himself of boots and coat, and thus unencumbered to creep stealthily as any burglar into the narrow space that too inadequately accommodated his bulk.

Would the lid of the desk creak? No; the workmanship was good and solid; the lid slid back without a sound. And now for the recess. Ah, there was a perceptible groan of the dry wood! How loud it sounded

in the hush of the night! Would Jessie jump up in a fright and confront him, pale and nervous, to overwhelm him with shame and reproach? He paused, conscience-stricken, to listen. No; all was still wrapped in unbroken silence, and here, without further ado, the little door flew open, and in the corner, neglected, half covered with dust, was the precious bundle he sought.

He stole with it on tiptoe to his room, thankful to have escaped detection; and there by the dim light of his candle, he proceeded to examine his treasure.

Why had he not asked of it its secret long ago? He could scarcely tell. Poor voice out of the past, now that he tardily gave it audience, what had it to say? Not much; the ink was faded and the lines blurred, and there was but little more piquancy in the sentiments than there is fragrance or beauty in last year's rose-leaves. The letters were dated from London, and were written by the wife to the husband while the latter was absent, as he often was, from home.

They were in no sense love letters such as Temple imagined a happy wife might still pen after years of wedded life; perhaps love was dead, and duty only survived. They were languid, inert, depressed as the writer herself must have been; no longings for the wandering husband's return; hardly a meagre allusion to the children—to Jessie and himself. Some chance only, and no merit in themselves, had saved them from destruction. Out of the ashes of long dead fires he lit on but one spark. "When I was young; in the old days at Liliesmuir—" it had fallen, perhaps, as a faint reproach on the receiver's ear; it was all Temple found to prize, or cherish.

At Liliesmuir—Liliesmuir—where might that be? It had a Scotch ring. Would those other Bartons, who were Scotch too, know the latitude and longitude of it? Might it perhaps be familiar and dear to them as it had been to his mother when she was young? He would find out. When next he saw them he would bring the name in cunningly—casually. He would watch their looks—Tilly's looks, her arching brows, her surprised, frank eyes.

When next he saw them! In the whirl of his excited thought it seemed so possible—so certain, so beyond a hazard that they should meet again.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 966. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceil,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER II. RESOLUTIONS.

SOEELY against the doctor's wishes, and still more against Gretchen's, Adrian Lyle had himself removed to the village inn two days after he had informed her of his resolution.

Worn, weak, wasted, he looked a mere shadow of the strong, brave manhood he had represented a few weeks back. But he was resolute in his determination to leave her roof, knowing now that some treacherous purpose must have lured him there, and fearing trouble for Gretchen in the future, which he would be powerless to avert.

For, like a revelation, there had come to him in his hours of sickness and danger, the belief that Bari had fathomed his secret. A hundred little things served to convince him that this fancy was correct, and he feared the subtle machinations of that wily mind, and dreaded, too, that Gretchen's innocent life might be soiled or smirched by suspicion.

No one should say in the future that he had remained for one hour longer than was imperative and necessary under her roof. There was proof, and to spare, of that. So, gently and firmly, and at his own risk and peril, he put aside her pleas and entreaties, and turned away from her gentle ministry to the rough and grudging care of strangers.

But he felt it was right, and, once feeling that, it was not in Adrian Lyle's nature to swerve aside for any temptings of expe-

dience, or desire. He had ample time for thought during the weary days which followed his removal; ample time in which to face his life as it would look and be in the future. There was no use in putting the question aside; no use in saying he had dreamt a foolish dream. Only too well he knew that that dream was his life's earnest—that without hope, without help, without desire or wish of his own, he loved this girl, who could never be anything to him; whose heart was given in its first fond idolatry to a selfish and unworthy man.

"It is too late to hide the truth now," he told himself in these hours of dreary self-communing. "Every heart has its burden. Mine is but like the rest. Perhaps in time I shall get used to it—in time——"

He drew his breath sharp, the pain was still so hard to bear; the long, desolate future had never looked so desolate as now, when he set his face sternly towards duty as his only goal.

The doctor was much interested in his patient, and gave him more of his time and attention than he usually bestowed on sick folk. But he saw there was something about Adrian Lyle far beyond the ordinary type of men. He saw, too, that something was troubling him grievously, to the detriment of all drugs and potions; and that his progress back to health was far slower and less satisfactory than his perfect physique and splendid constitution had promised. But neither sympathy nor curiosity won a sign of self-betrayal from Adrian Lyle. He locked his secret into his heart's most sacred chambers. He would discuss anything and everything with the most perfect frankness, but never by word or sign give any hint of the one dark trouble which had come into his life.

Weakness and self-indulgence were not

things with which he had any sympathy. He was not likely, therefore, to allow himself the poor comfort of either. Manfully, sternly, bravely he fought the battle out with himself, knowing full well that he would bear its scars to the day of his death; blaming her in no wise, yet conscious to the full how enthralling was the sweet, magnetic grace of her presence, and how vainly he had combated its charm.

"There is no use trying to explain it," he said; "I cannot do it. Perhaps there is no reason why I should. I—I have never tried to understand any woman; it did not seem necessary; and those I have known never seemed to me interesting. But she——"

Then he checked himself abruptly. What use to dwell on fair face, and tender smile, and every trick of manner and gesture which he knew too well?

"I must get well," he said, resolutely. "I must go back to work and duty. That will be the best cure."

Just then some letters were brought to him which had been sent on from Medehurst. One was from the Rector, pompously lamenting his illness, inasmuch as it had caused great inconvenience and disturbance to his reverend self, and was therefore something to be resented as an ill-advised and not altogether respectful proceeding on the part of a Curate; mingling parish details and personal complaints in a curious jumble.

There was another letter, written from Eaton Square, London, which had been sent to his lodgings at Medehurst, and now forwarded. It was dated some weeks back; an eloquent and grateful epistle from the young widow whose cause he had pleaded with Alexis Kenyon. It said how comfortable and happy the writer was, and spoke in high terms of the kindness of the lady in whose house she lived, concluding with innumerable thanks to him for the trouble he had taken on her behalf, in procuring her an engagement so much to her mind.

The letter astonished Adrian Lyle. Other events had followed so quickly on that interview with Alexis Kenyon, that he had never even thought again of the woman whose cause he had pleaded. Who then had done this service? It must have been Lady Breresford. It never occurred to him that Alexis Kenyon could have given the subject a moment's consideration after she had dismissed it in such scornful fashion. But he felt pleased

to think that the friendless woman whose cause he had pleaded, should have been so speedily aided and befriended.

He penned a few words of thanks to Lady Breresford, and forwarded the letter to the Abbey; then wrote to the Rector, saying that he hoped to be back at his post in a week at the latest; that he deeply regretted that circumstances had not permitted him to ask the reverend gentleman's permission to be ill, before taking the liberty of becoming so. He also enclosed a medical certificate as to the nature of that illness and his present condition.

Having thus relieved his mind, he got up and made a feeble effort to dress. The doctor had lent him an old velvet dressing-gown, which was much too short for his tall frame, but he wrapped it round him, and staggered weakly across the room to an easy-chair by the window. Then he sat down, panting and exhausted from his efforts—efforts born more of resolute will than physical powers.

It was close on sunset, and his gaze lingered rapturously on the gold and violet hues of the sky; on the far-off glow of the ripened cornfields; on the leafy shade of the thick woods stretching over the level country; on the herds of cattle crossing the grass-land; the distant figures of field labourers and children, their voices ringing glad and clear on the stillness.

"One ought to be grateful for life," he thought. "The world is so beautiful, and there is always something one can do for others."

As the thought ended with a sigh that would fain have been one of content, there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he said, thinking it was the servant bringing in his tea.

It opened slowly. On the threshold stood Gretchen.

Though every day he had told himself she might come, yet her presence was enough of a surprise to set his pulses leaping madly and feverishly—to turn face and lips white as death as he gave her his hand, and felt the warm, firm clasp of hers.

"So you are sitting up!" she said, looking down with glad, sweet eyes at his face. "I am so glad! But how ill you look still! Are you wise? And do they take care of you here?"

"Oh, yes," he said with effort, "they are very good, and I am much better. Won't you sit down?"

"I have brought you some fruit," she

said, showing him the little basket in her hand. "Grapes, you see. I know they are good for sick people, and Peggy made you some jelly. We did not forget you, you see, though you were so anxious to get away from us."

"Is that still a grievance?" he asked, with the grave and tender smile which she knew so well. "How good of you to bring me this—to think of me at all!"

"I should be very ungrateful not to do that," she said, seating herself opposite to him. "I—I suppose," she went on suddenly, "I ought not to say so—but you look worse, much worse, than when you were with me."

"Do I?" he said lightly. "That is because I am up and in ordinary dress again. Don't you know that is the real test of invalidism?"

She was silent for a moment, studying him and his surroundings with a grave earnestness which amused and pained him at one and the same moment.

Suddenly she rose and fetched a pillow from the bed, and put it behind him in the great roomy chair; then she brought a footstool from another corner and placed it underneath his feet, and taking up a large, light, fleecy shawl which she had thrown down on her entrance, she placed it carefully over his knees. "Now," she said, withdrawing to a short distance and surveying the effect, "now that is better. You see you can't do without a nurse yet."

"I wish," he said huskily, "you would not trouble yourself about me. I am not used to—to—such attentions."

"You are not used," she said, "to being ill, so it is different. And men are so careless," she went on with pretty wisdom. "I suppose you forget that you have had that fever with the dreadful name, what you call rheu—rheum—a-tick, is it not? If I were your mother now, or sister, how I would make you take care!"

"Would you?" he said, with a weak attempt at a smile. "I should think it would feel very pleasant. I have never had anyone to take care of me."

"You never looked," she said, "as if you needed it before. But it is dreadful to see you so changed."

"I am a gaunt and terrible object, I know," said Adrian Lyle. "I am quite sorry to shock you so. Why did you come?"

"Perhaps I ought not to have come," she said. "I—I was half afraid; I

thought you might not like it—but I was very anxious about you."

It seemed to Adrian Lyle that no sweeter words would ever sound in his ears than those. He could not answer them for a moment. A mist seemed to float before his eyes; the sunny room grew dark.

When he had recovered himself, she was busy unpacking her little basket, and it was delight enough to him to lean back there on the pillows she had arranged, and watch her deft fingers; the grace of her every movement; the sunlight playing on her lovely hair; the pretty, tender care she manifested for his comfort.

Presently, the servant who waited on him brought in tea, and Gretchen arranged her fruit and jelly on the white cloth, and set a bowl of roses in the middle, and poured out his tea and brought it to him with her own hands.

How strange it seemed that she should be there, ministering to his comforts! How her personality affected the bareness and ugliness of the room! He leant back in the big chair, and seemed vaguely to realise what poets had said of the charm of a woman's presence.

The soft folds of the shawl on his knees seemed to breathe of her. The very flowers were associated with those days when he had first become conscious of where he was, and had seen her in her simple white gown with a rose at her throat. There was no resisting the magic of this hour. It had come to him unsought—full to the brim of passionate gladness, and yet more passionate dread.

But she was there, before him, close to him, and all the vague unreality of a dream seemed to hold his senses in check, and impress itself upon his brain.

He was very quiet, but his silence in no way distressed her. She felt that he liked to see her there, and the feeling held in it more comfort than she could have expressed.

It was very pleasant to her to minister to him. He, who was so big, and grave, and had always been so strong, was now helpless as a child, and dependent on a woman for those little cares and attentions which smooth the path of convalescence.

And it was just those little housewifely cares and attentions that were so bewildering to Adrian Lyle. That young, grave face was infinitely more charming in its gravity than in its smiles. It spoke of deeper feelings and deeper sympathies; it

moved him to reverence as well as to admiration.

The hour passed on, and the sunset faded, and he knew that a double darkness would fall upon him when her presence was withdrawn. Yet never, by word or look, did he cross the barrier he had raised between them; never by faintest sign betray that she was anything to him but a woman to be held in perfect and chivalrous respect.

"You will let me come again?" she said, standing with her hand in his for a moment, looking with compassionate eyes at the wasted face, and the loose wave of dark hair tossed back from the temples.

"Come once more," he said. "Just to bid me good-bye. I must go to my duties next week."

"If you had not been so ill," she said gently, "I would have asked you to explain more to me about all you said in Rome. I go to the church here, but I do not understand the service, and I do not like the priest. I wish I could hear you in your church."

He was silent for a moment, wondering in what subtle guise temptation would assail him next. "If I can be of any assistance to you," he said at last, "pray command me. If there is anything you would wish—explained——"

"There are a thousand things," she said despondingly. "But I will not trouble you. It would take so long."

His face grew white and somewhat stern. "I never flinch from duty," he said. "I am here for another week. Anything I can explain for you, I will."

"Thank you," she said simply. "Tomorrow is Sunday; may I come—tomorrow?"

"Certainly, if you wish," was the quiet response—quiet as only the bitterness of heart-ache and despair could make it.

But how should she know that?

"Fate is too strong for me," thought Adrian Lyle, as day after day brought with it that fair young presence; as day by day his earnest teaching and simple explanations brought the creeds and tenets of a noble faith more and more clearly to her anxious and doubting mind.

She was like a child needing help and encouragement, and like a child she would drink in his words, and listen to his reading of what had long been to her a forbidden Book. Her ignorance and helplessness touched him deeply. The task of lead-

ing that young soul to spiritual light and hope, was one that seemed intensely sacred. As strength and health came gradually back, he set all the resolution of his mind to this one object—putting aside his own pain, setting at naught his after-sufferings, if only he might give her help for future trial, or lead her to the highest and holiest of all Comforters, when some dark hour should fill her soul with sorrow.

So he taught, and so she listened in the waning glory of the summer days, and the week he had appointed for his task passed on, and another took its place, and a third dawned before he could quite set himself free. She had begun to depend on him as he had never dreamt she would, and she dreaded being left alone without counsellor or friend.

That difficulty—which is essentially a feminine one—of separating the teacher from the thing taught, made her cling to Adrian Lyle's presence as a surety of what was still vague, and dark, and unrealised. Without him, she felt like a rudderless boat adrift on a dark and unknown sea, and he could with difficulty persuade her that religion was a personal thing, to be carried on between the soul and its Creator without the intervention of any other human being, were he fifty times a priest.

Gradually, however, he saw a change. Perplexity and doubt were less painful. An aroused conscience and an earthly love seemed to have some common ground of sympathy, and Adrian Lyle's large-souled charity taught her how much it was possible to hope for that future, which all man's wisdom cannot make hopeful by light of science, or by power of reason.

He could have wished his task harder than it was; but with so sweet and trustful a nature he met with no difficulties save those of intense personal humility, and a fear of individual effort almost child-like.

But a day and hour arrived, when he knew he must leave at last. It was then she unconsciously tried all his hard-won control to the utmost. Seeing in him only the priest and not the man, it never occurred to her what tortures she was inflicting. It seemed to her a right and natural thing to sit at the feet, so to speak, of one so wise and good as her teacher; to join the intensity of feminine faith with a fervid belief in the spiritual altitude of its human expounder.

He had guided her through a maze of darkness. He had made life look a brighter,

and greater, and more noble thing than ever her imagination had pictured it. He had led her to the footstool of prayer, and opened to her the arms of that great and loving Fatherhood, which, till he spoke of it, had been veiled in mysticism, and shrined at unapproachable altars.

It seemed to her, therefore, but natural that her heart should overflow with gratitude, and express its grief for his departure with the sorrowful frankness of a child.

It was hard for him to look at the entreating face; the tearful eyes; the sad, beseeching lips, and know that by no word or look must he betray the danger of their spell. All that lay in his power he had done for her in his twofold character of man and priest. Now he told her gently, but firmly, that his own duty must no longer be neglected—that between herself and the God she worshipped must lie the secrets of her heart and the desires of her soul.

If any baser feeling for one moment allured him with its tempting, if the vague mystical wants, the appealing weakness, the childlike trust of that nature whispered how easily might the craft of priesthood spin its web of doom, how easily might the mask of celestial affinity be worn to blind those trustful eyes, it was but the tempting of one dark hour's despair, to be atoned for by such terrible penance of mental suffering as never brain of man conceived.

The hour of parting came, and he left her. She unquestioning, unsuspecting, and clinging to him with tearful entreaties and piteous regrets; and he standing in the mingled light and shadow of the day's last hour, a faint smile upon his lips, but on the haggard face the glow of a martyr's courage, and within the suffering heart, the agony of a man's despair.

"Tell Bari," she said, as she looked longingly up to him, "that for once in his life, he has done me a service. I feel I could almost thank him!"

Oh, light words, careless, inconsequent, impulsive, how darkly and with what bitter pain was the future to recall their memory, even as the past was stretching out to claim them with a hand of doom!

HOUSES.

It is a pleasant summer afternoon. We have chatted among our books, and about them and their makers. We have re-

freshed ourselves with "the cup that cheers," and now, dear reader, I propose a walk. We will go along the main road, which we will leave by a rustic stile, take a pleasant footpath by the side of the hedge, and, leaning on a gate at the end, we shall contemplate as pretty a rural scene as can be found anywhere within twenty miles of London. But what is this? The stile is gone; there is a broad road of thick mud across the field, the beautiful hedge is cut down, and the ground is cumbered with great heaps of bricks and piles of boards and poles. Alas! my friend, another of my favourite walks is doomed; for the arch enemy of rural beauty has arrived. Jerry and all his brethren are upon us! Along the main road we shall soon see a line of big houses, ornamented with all the latest fads—improvements, Jerry calls them. Behind will arise streets of showy-looking houses, whose only strength will be in numbers, holding each other up, mutual friends in brick. Lastly will come rows of fever traps; built with bad bricks, mud mortar, and unseasoned timber half the proper thickness; drained with broken pipes; roofed with slates that split and fall off; nailed with soft or brittle nails; lighted with windows of cheap, wavy glass in green-wood frames; having doors "neat as imported," warranted to open in every panel after two months of sunshine. These, after being strengthened with putty, and beautified with paint and paper, will be published as the latest edition of the "Happy Homes of England," by Jerry and Son.

I see that my rural cottage will soon be "in populous city pent," and I must prepare myself for another migration. For years I have been striving to live amidst green fields where I might breathe the fresh air, and enjoy at times a solitary and silent walk, and yet be within what the advertisements term "easy access from the City." For years have I been thwarted by the demon builder, and driven to seek "fresh woods and pastures new." It is pitiful to think of the pleasant scenery he has destroyed, and the fine old houses that have fallen before him. Let us visit the neighbourhood, somewhat nearer London, from which I was last exiled by him. Standing a couple of hundred yards from where they are running up a row of suburban cottages, on the spot which last winter was a low-lying pool of water. we may look through the

broken hedge at that deserted mansion. A broad carriage-drive, sweeping round from the large gates of beautiful iron-work, leads up to a pillared portico. A fine, roomy, well-built, old mansion this. There are the remains of conservatories and greenhouses. We may be sure there are some good stable-buildings close by. Fifty years ago this was probably as secluded and quiet a spot as could be found in any distant shire. Hither would the merchant drive home at night from the City behind a couple of stout horses that would do the distance from Cornhill under the hour. Fruit trees, flower-beds, pine-houses, a well-cultivated kitchen garden, ministered to the rural tastes of the owner. On the lawn the little ones often played, or strolled with their governess. That big elm once shaded a pleasant seat, where the girls have wept over many a delicious novel, or furtively read and re-read some still more delicious billet-doux which had been deftly slipped into book or nosegay by young Hawkins of the Priory, or that splendid Lieutenant Brown, son of the eminent Alderman. But time has passed swiftly on: young Hawkins went over to the majority long ago; Brown was shot at Chilianwallah; and the mansion has found itself gradually surrounded by the destructive arms of the great octopus, London. No one who could pay an adequate rent would live now in this neighbourhood, and, as field after field around it becomes "ripe" for building, the good old mansion is doomed. Next year, if you walk this way, not a vestige of it will remain; but instead you will find Smart Street, Horse-shoe Crescent, and Mary Jane Avenue, in one of which thoroughfares will be erected a big public-house, with a billiard-room for the solace of the young City clerks who may find eligible apartments in this genteel suburb.

In some of the older parts of London, in or adjacent to the City, we may even now come across rows of houses, once inhabited by people of considerable pretensions, but now the homes of the lower classes. Stand with me, in imagination, in this court, as yet spared by railway companies, not yet bought up by speculator in gigantic warehouses or offices, and at present out of the line of new streets or model markets. The whole width of the thoroughfare is paved, with a narrow channel cut in the centre for a watercourse. There is no carriage road,

for the people for whom these houses were built came home, when they did not walk, from tavern, coffee-house, or theatre, in sedan-chairs. Lamps were slung across the street, or fixed to the fronts of the houses. If you should venture inside, you would find wide staircases with broad hand-rails, in some cases elaborately carved. The walls are wainscotted, the window-frames solid, with perchance here and there a pane of glass with a great knob in the centre, a relic of old times and old methods.

Standing in this dingy court, and meditating upon Georgian days, we gradually lose our mental hold upon the realities of the present. We see passing before us ladies with towering head-dresses, enormous hooped skirts, their dresses looped up in graceful folds, showing brilliant petticoats, gay clocked stockings, and dainty shoes. We see grave citizens, or foppish beaux, the sword protruding from the skirts of their gaily-coloured coats; their laced waistcoats nearly to their knees; their wigs of price; their long dangling cravats. Here is a courtly gentleman about to step into his sedan-chair, by the side of which stand two portly chairmen. A lady, looking from a window above, is saluted with an elaborate bow.

A noisy shout rouses me from my day-dream; the sedan-chair turns into a coster's barrow; the gentleman is Bill Smith just off to his "pitch" in Leather Lane, and the lady is Biddy Murphy, who is lolling at a first-floor window in such a state as might be expected of an Irish lady who has been "on the drink" for a week. "To such base uses may we come, Horatio!"

Truly, houses are like men in their fortunes. Some meet with reverses and come down in the world; some have a brief career; others attain to an old age of honour. Some become famous for having been the dwelling or the birthplace of a great man; others, because in them was conceived some noble writing or some famous plot. Some are notorious, like "the old house in West Street," known also as "Jonathan Wild's house," close to Saffron Hill. This place, with its dark closets, trap-doors, sliding panels, and secret hiding places, had been for many years a favourite refuge for highwaymen, burglars, and other rogues; and no doubt the corpse of many a murdered man has been thrown from it into the muddy stream of the Fleet Ditch. Having attained the ripe old age of three hundred years it was demolished,

and its site is one of the busiest spots in London, for it must be close to where the Metropolitan Railway enters Farringdon Street, right in the shadow of the Viaduct.

In some parts of London we may come upon several forlorn and neglected-looking houses, dirty, dilapidated, with every window broken, covered inside with black dust and cobwebs—a very picture of decay and desolation. The poorer inhabitants of the neighbourhood explain all this by styling them the “Haunted Houses.” They are in Chancery, and, if haunted, it is by the ghosts of wasted lives, of life-long hopes never to be fulfilled, of lives that might have been useful and glorious, wasted in that sickening waiting for a settlement and a to-morrow that never comes. Some houses which are credited with being haunted may, perhaps, have gained that reputation through being what we may term deserted houses. The owner takes a dislike to his house for some reason or other, and will neither live in it nor allow anyone else to do so. Perhaps the death of a beloved wife, or of an only son or daughter, has made it hateful to him; perhaps some hated scene in his life has occurred there, and he has doomed it, long before it came into his possession, to be a deserted house when in his power; perhaps some fearful secret, or undiscovered crime, has made his guilty conscience afraid to think of the house inhabited by human beings. Such a deserted house becomes a ruin, a place of fear and trembling, and, known for miles round as the “Haunted House,” is avoided by young and old.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling-place, and yet no habitation;
A house, but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.
O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

To some minds, every old house is haunted. Every chamber is visited by ghosts, memories of the past. Longfellow, in one of his poems, beautifully expresses this idea. He speaks of meeting them at the door, on the stairs, and in the passages. He feels their presence amongst the guests at table, and thinks,

The illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

A small town-house, in which one feels everywhere close to the street, is hardly likely to encourage such thoughts as these; but an old-fashioned, rambling country-

house, with many passages, staircases with quaint corners, cheery window seats, and rooms which have been occupied by two or three generations of the same family is most congenial to these ideas. If you live and have lived in such a house as this, you are constantly meeting familiar ghostly forms. Just at that spot in the hall comes little Arthur, as you so often saw him running to meet you. At times you meet fair Ellen descending the stairs in her brown travelling dress, you see her smiling, trembling lip; her happy, tearful glance; just as when she left the dear old home with her companion on that journey of life, which, alas! proved all too short. In that seat by the window, you still fancy golden-haired Bertie sitting intently pouring over books of bold adventure, tales of battle and of travel; pirates, savages, diamonds, gold, sailors, storms, blue seas, and waving palms, all mingling in vivid pictures on his boyish brain, and stirring up his young heart to firm resolves of future brave and gallant deeds. There again you see him sitting with bronzed face, big beard, and broad shoulders, just as you found him when he first came back from China. Again, that chair is still called “Father’s,” at that door mother turned and smiled upon you as she said “Good-night” for the last time. To you and yours only are these visible.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear;
He but perceives what is; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

Perhaps the most ancient kind of house is that so dear to the old adepts and believers in astrology. The zodiac was divided by some of them into twenty-eight days or mansions, each giving some special power to the planet in it. Others divided it into twelve houses, the house of life, of fortune, of death, of dignities, and so on, giving to each house one of the planets as its lord or ruler. From the relative positions of these houses and the planets at any given moment, the astrologers professed to show the future connected with the event—a person’s birth, for instance—occurring at that instant. Reading the stars was therefore looked upon as a valuable method of obtaining a knowledge of secrets both of the past and the future. Many of the lower class of astrologers were ready to apply their pretended knowledge to the most humble purposes, and occupied much the same position as the less pretentious “wise men,” or fortune-tellers of later

times. Butler, in his *Hudibras*, makes many sarcastic allusions to them.

They'll search a Planet's House, to know
Who broke and robb'd a House below :
Examine Venus and the Moon
Who stole a thimble or a spoon.

We are too wise to consult astrologers nowadays, but should a glib politician, who can talk for hours at a stretch, simply give us his word that certain things will happen if we do not follow his lead, we shout at once, "a Daniel, a Daniel," and vote him into power to save us from all kinds of terrible calamities. The mere fact that he has proved to be in the wrong over and over again is nothing. "Worde, not deeds," is the motto of the time, and a jawbone is as powerful now as in the days of Samson. But as this brings us to the threshold of a house we do not care to enter, let us pass on quickly.

There are houses which have been built upon the sterling qualities and noble deeds of some brave, or wise, or honest persevering men, and have been supported by their worthy successors till we find them classed among the noble houses of the land. Not all great houses, however, have such honest foundations. Some have been founded on a fair lady's charms; some spring from the successful cringing of a wily courtier; others from the supple voting and artful manœuvring of a turn-coat politician.

The royal houses of England, among which we may surely class the Stuarts as an unlucky house, have, in their rising and falling, lifted and brought down many a noble family, brought many a head to the scaffold, and caused thousands of gallant men to shed their blood upon the battlefield. The quarrels of the houses of York and Lancaster filled the land with misery and bloodshed, set father against son, brother against brother, devastated the land, lost our possessions in France, and utterly destroyed many of the ancient noble families. That fatal morning in the Temple Gardens, when the roses were chosen as symbols of hatred instead of love, had far worse results than Warwick feared when he said the day

Shall send, between the red rose and the white,
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

The struggles of the house of Stuart against our liberties unsettled the land for a hundred years, and the incoming of the house of Brunswick caused millions of our money to be lavished on Continental wars.

The house which it is, perhaps, impos-

sible to contemplate without a feeling of sadness is that which closes the vista of too many a life. After years of hard work and misfortune, the workhouse is the only shelter which offers to some who may have deserved better things. Doubtless things are much more satisfactory than they were when Bumble had hundreds of living prototypes, and when Mrs. Corney was a true picture of what her admirer called "porochial perfection." But we fear that, in spite of years of ridicule, and sarcasm, and notices of the press, "the gentleman in the white waistcoat," the "Sowerberry," and "the Board," still flourish to grind the faces of the poor, and to give them stones for bread.

How glad many must be to know that they will soon find a quiet place in that last narrow house, that house of clay to which all alike must come, rich or poor, peer or peasant !

Doorless is that house,
And dark it is within ;
There thou art fast detained,
And Death hath the key.

ANECDOTES OF THE FRENCH STAGE.

IN a scarce little pamphlet, published anonymously about 1830, are some interesting and not generally known details respecting the Parisian theatres, evidently compiled by a writer thoroughly conversant with his subject. A few of these, which to the best of my knowledge have not been recorded elsewhere, are sufficiently curious to merit reproduction.

The origin of the custom, according to which French dramatists are paid by a share of the receipts, dates from 1633; the first piece produced on these conditions, *Les Rivaies*, by Quinault, having been played in that year. It came to pass in this wise. From the limited number of theatres at that period, access to them was extremely difficult for authors unprovided with an established reputation; and this was precisely the case of Quinault, then at the commencement of his career, and entirely unknown. Fortunately for him, Tristan l'Ermite, a writer of acknowledged celebrity, and in high favour with the actors, interested himself in behalf of the young dramatist, and, in order to ensure the performance of *Les Rivaies*, offered it to the committee of management as his own work. Its acceptance followed, as a matter

of course, and the remuneration was fixed at a hundred crowns. No sooner, however, had the arrangement been made than Quinault was presented as the real author; whereupon the comedians, thinking they had been too liberal to an inexperienced beginner, reduced their offer to a sum of fifty crowns, which was refused. After much discussion—the piece having been meanwhile examined and approved—they proposed to allow the author a ninth part of the receipts for a certain number of representations, which was finally agreed to.

In our own days, the obstacles encountered by young writers are not less disheartening; one of the most insurmountable being the opposition of the house-authors, attached to certain theatres, jealous of any infringement of the quasi-monopoly enjoyed by them, and avowedly hostile to outsiders. Managers rely implicitly on the judgement of these “faisseurs,” as they are generally styled, and seldom look at a piece from an unknown hand without first submitting the manuscript to one of them, and requesting his opinion of the work. The “faiseur,” if unscrupulous, as is often the case, sees at a glance if any novel and effective incident can be advantageously utilised, and quietly makes a note of it. He then returns the manuscript to the manager as unsuitable, and loses no time in embodying the borrowed idea in a piece of his own, which is duly presented and accepted. At his suggestion the real author, who is naturally anxious to learn the fate of his production, is informed that one on the same subject has already been received, and is about to be put into rehearsal; upon which, if not entirely disgusted by his failure, he tries again; but always with a similar result. As a last resource, he applies to an experienced colleague, who graciously consents to examine the manuscript submitted to him, on the express understanding that, in the event of its being played, his name alone shall appear in the bills; and this condition complied with, the piece, if accepted by a manager, is in due course performed as the work of the celebrated author, who has not written a line of it. Should it prove successful, the latter becomes more tractable, and, not wishing to lose so promising a collaborator, permits him, on a second attempt, to share with him the honour of publicity, and even allows him a small percentage on the profits: so that, little by little, the young

writer emerges from obscurity, and is soon enabled to dispense with the by no means disinterested support of his patron. Many leading dramatists have begun their career in this way, and few underwent a longer or more tedious apprenticeship than Eugène Scribe, whose thirteen first essays, like the early operas of his future collaborator, Auber, were signal failures.

Old playgoers may remember the long-since demolished theatre of the famous rope-dancer, Madame Saqui, on the Boulevard du Temple. It was originally a “café-spectacle,” where, in order to attract customers, a company of acrobats displayed their agility at stated hours of the day; these were succeeded by pantomimists, who, however, were only allowed to appear on condition that each actor should perform a feat of tumbling before his dumb show began; so that the lover of the troupe was literally debarred from paying his court to the lady of his affections without previously executing a somersault.

It is no uncommon thing in certain theatres for an actor to stipulate that, in addition to his regular engagement, another, at a considerable higher rate of salary, should be drawn out; the latter not being binding on the manager, but serving the double purpose of gratifying the comedian's vanity, and of enabling him to produce it in justification of his pretensions when contracting elsewhere. During Harel's management of the Porte St. Martin, Frederic Lemaitre's nominal salary amounted, with extras, to sixty thousand francs, an enormous sum in those days, and wholly disproportionate to the average receipts. The arrangement having been merely oral, the actor suggested that a formal engagement should be properly prepared and signed by both parties.

“By all means,” said Harel, “provided you agree to what I am about to propose, namely, to a reduction of one half. Hear me out,” he added. “Sixty thousand francs mean bankruptcy for me, and, consequently, nothing for you. If you take my advice, you will be satisfied with the credit of having them, and accept thirty thousand, and you will get your money!”

Frederic thought the matter over, and, rightly judging that half a loaf was better than no bread, finally consented.

Many years ago, I made the acquaintance in Paris of an old gentleman named Salé, whose father had been director of

the Théâtre des Associés — afterwards Théâtre Patriotique—from 1760 to 1795. Among other curious anecdotes relating to that epoch, he told me that the actors of the Comédie Française, hearing that several pieces belonging to them had been produced without their permission at the Théâtre des Associés, formally intimated to the manager that any further infraction of their privilege would inevitably entail on him the immediate suppression of his theatre. On the receipt of this missive, Salé wrote to them at follows: "Gentlemen, I intend giving to-morrow a representation of *Zaire*, and request that you will honour me by witnessing it. If you recognise Monsieur Voltaire's tragedy as it is played by my company, I promise never again to borrow a single piece from you." At the appointed hour Lekain, Préville, and Bellecour, took their seats in a box reserved for them, and laughed so heartily from the beginning to the end of the "tragedy" that at the conclusion of the performance they with one accord withdrew their opposition, and informed the manager that their entire repertory was very much at his service.

Salé, by all accounts, was a proficient in the art of puffing, if we may judge from his announcement of *Le Festin de Pierre*, in which an actor called Pompée personated Don Juan, and was advertised in the bills to change his dress twelve times. "He will carry off the Commander's daughter in a coat of superfine velvet, and will be struck by lightning in a costume covered with spangles!"

The same gentleman related to me the following anecdote: "Among the many small theatres vegetating rather than flourishing at that period, was one called the Boudoir des Muses, where comedies of Molière were frequently given. A wag amused himself by signing a quantity of free admissions with the name of the great dramatist, and distributing them right and left. The number of these increased so rapidly that the manager, whose literary attainments were not of the highest order, became suspicious, and assembled his subordinates with the view of elucidating the matter. 'Some of you,' he said to them, 'ought to know by sight the authors of my theatre. When you see Monsieur Molière, tell him that I wish to speak to him, for he sends in more tickets than he has any right to.'"

Martainville, the editor of the "*Drapeau Blanc*," who in his youth had been

an indifferent actor, was once reproached by a colleague for his extreme indulgence as a theatrical critic. "I can't help it," he replied; "I have a fellow feeling for those who fail on the stage, for not one of them is half so bad as I was."

The present theatre, the Bouffes Parisiennes, in the Passage Choiseul, was originally founded by Comte in 1827, under the name of Théâtre des Jeunes Élèves, several actors of repute, including Hyacinthe, Francisque, and Colbrun, having commenced their career there. Comte was a clever ventriloquist, and the following story is recorded of him during a provincial tour. While strolling through a village near Châlons on a market day, he came across a peasant woman with a pig for sale, and offered to buy it, inquiring the price. "Sixty francs," she replied; on which a voice, apparently issuing from the animal's throat, declared that he was only worth five francs. Startled by this unexpected avowal, the woman uttered loud cries, and appealed to a "garde-champêtre" who was standing by for protection against the sorcerer—pointing to Comte—who had bewitched her pig. That functionary listened to her complaint with stolid gravity, and unwilling to incur any personal responsibility, decided on referring the matter to the mayor of the locality, who, when the case had been stated, asked Comte for an explanation, and could hardly believe his ears when the pig—at least, so it seemed—affirmed that he was glad of an opportunity of expressing his admiration of the skilful ventriloquist, Signor Comte. The affair, meanwhile, had made a great noise in the village, and the mayor's suggestion that the reputed conjuror should give a performance that evening in an outbuilding suitable for the purpose, was eagerly responded to by the inhabitants; part of the proceeds being liberally handed over to the owner of the pig, who went on her way rejoicing.

A French actor, engaged at St Petersburg in 1840, arrived there in the depth of winter, and in the presence of the "moujik" in charge of his baggage, involuntarily shivered, and complained of the cold. An hour later, he was summoned to appear before the Minister of Police. "My good friend," blandly remarked that dignitary, "your intention, I believe, is to remain here several years; but, previously to deciding on so important a step, it may be as well for you to consider if the

climate is likely to suit you. If not, I should recommend you to return to France."

"May I presume to ask," replied the comedian, "why your Excellency deigns to interest himself about my health?"

"Because you have already made an unflattering allusion to the temperature of Russia."

"I could not suppose, your Excellency," objected the actor, "that I should incur your displeasure by saying that I was half frozen."

"Monsieur," gravely observed the minister, "in Russia, any open expression of opinion is, to say the least, imprudent. The matter in itself is unimportant, but it was my duty to take the first opportunity of impressing on you the policy of silence, the strict observance of which will be greatly to your advantage."

After a ten years' sojourn at St. Petersburg the actor returned to Paris, and among other incidents of the travel mentioned this interview.

"Did you follow the minister's advice?" asked one of his colleagues.

"Religiously," he replied; "and, to give you an example of my taciturnity, I used to play at dominoes at a café every afternoon; and although the double four was missing from the day of my arrival to that of my departure, I never even ventured to hint that it wasn't there!"

Some years ago, the passengers on board a steamer from Havre to New Orleans, included a company of singers engaged for the Opera of the latter city. One morning, when the sea was unusually calm and sickness temporarily forgotten, several of them appeared on deck, and by way of practice, essayed their voices in the favourite airs of their respective repertoires. Suddenly it became evident that no fewer than five tenors were among the number, and great was the wrath of each individual on the discovery. With one accord they appealed to the manager, upbraiding him for a palpable breach of contract; every one of them maintaining that he had been engaged as the sole tenor of the company.

"Gentlemen," replied the manager, "you have no reason to accuse me of disloyalty, or of having taken more than the necessary precautions. Before we have been a week at New Orleans, two of you will in all probability die of yellow fever, and two more during the rehearsals; I need scarcely add that the survivor, whoever he may be, will, according to

the terms of his engagement, be my only tenor."

During the reign of Louis Philippe, a dramatic author named Tournemine undertook the management of the Théâtre de Luxembourg, familiarly known as Bobino. Anxious to secure the patronage of the leading critics of the day, such as Janin, Théophile Gautier, and Eugène Guinot, he directed his secretary to write to them, soliciting the honour of their support, and informing them that free admissions to his theatre were accorded them. Six months later, while looking over the list of privileged visitors, he expressed a hope that every attention had been paid to the gentlemen in question; and was literally dumbfounded on hearing that not one of them had profited by the invitation.

"What!" he exclaimed, "is this the return for my civility? Write to them immediately, and let these ill-bred individuals know that their free admissions are withdrawn, and that henceforth, if they choose to come to my theatre, they may pay at the door like other people!"

On the occasion of the late Emperor's marriage, a gratuitous performance of The Huguenots was given at the Opera, and as usual attracted an immense crowd of spectators. One of these, a "dame de la Halle," sitting in the upper boxes and evidently desirous of prolonging her enjoyment to the utmost possible extent, vigorously applauded the solo vocalists, but listened impatiently to anything in the shape of a "morceau d'ensemble." Far from being impressed by the magnificent chorus, the "Blessing of the Poniards," she rose from her seat and indignantly exclaimed; "Ah, the rascally cheats, they sing all at once that they may have done the sooner!"

A royal Duke, wishing to present an actor of a Boulevard theatre with a token of his approval, decided on sending him a snuff-box, but first commissioned his secretary to ascertain if the artist in question took snuff. The offer was accepted with enthusiastic gratitude.

"Very good," said the secretary, "give me your address, and you shall have it to-morrow."

"If it is all the same to you," replied the actor, "the best plan would be to deposit it at the Mont de Piété, and to send me the ticket and—what you get for it!"

Thirty or forty years ago, a fairly spectacle called "Zazezizozu," was produced at the Cirque Olympique, a principal feature in it

being the representation of a game of dominoes, each personated by a "super." At the first rehearsal of the piece, one of these complained bitterly of the flagrant injustice experienced by him.

"What do you mean?" inquired the stage manager.

"Mean, sir! The way in which I have been treated is positively scandalous. Here is a young fellow engaged last week, who is cast for the double six, while I, who have belonged to the Cirque for twenty years, am only thought worthy of the double blank!"

The following letter, addressed by Mdlle. Rachel to a dramatic critic, is a pretty specimen of her familiar style.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Some well-informed people tell me that I have a chance of making up our quarrel, and I shall soon see if they are right. Enclosed is a box ticket for this evening. If you come, I will play Camille (in Les Horaces) extremely well; if you do not, I shall revenge myself by playing it better still, in order that you may regret not having accepted my invitation!—RACHEL"

ANEMONES.

It was a happy holiday of ours!

When first we trod the sunny southern shore!

'Twas that poor patch of closely-tended flowers

I saw, this moment, through the hot-house door,
That sent my fancy flying o'er the seas,
To that bright day we saw Anemones—

Saw them in glory, do you recollect?

Or are the trackless plains of Heaven too fair

To care how richly, royally, they decked

The mountain-side, as we stood lingering there,

Happy in wonder, beauty, love—we two;

How much of all has passed from life with you!

Above us shone the bright Italian sun,

Below, the "city of the golden shell;"

Around, the haunts we knew when life begun,

Through the old pages that we loved so well;

And all about us sky, and hill, and sea,

Lay in the glory that was—Sicily.

And spreading far adown the mountain-side,

The flashing masses of the flowers sprung;

And as we looked from where, in marble pride,

She, 'mid her jewels, lay, who died so young;

Down Pellegrino swept the scented breeze,

And "Look," you said, "at the Anemones!"

How all the crimson living lustre swayed

Like rosy billows on the ocean swell;

Then tossed their fairy heads as if they made

A voiceless music from each fragile bell;

Till, dazzled by their glow, we turned away.

Have you forgotten, dear, that crowning day?

Forgotten our sweet month of wandering?

Forgotten our long life of flawless love?

Forgotten our slow parting's bitter sting,

In the blessed waiting of the life above?

They are but English blooms I train to wave

Beside the northern sea-board, on your grave.

TAMBA.

A QUEENSLAND BUSH IDYL.

IN those days—now, alas! gone by—when heart was young, when hope was strong, when courage was firm, and when muscle and thw and sinew were braced up for toil, it was my fortune to come into possession of a virgin tract of land in the far west of the Colony of Queensland, some two hundred square miles in area, which it was my endeavour to form into a sheep-run, or station. The toil was hard, the difficulties formidable, and at first the hand of Fortune unkind; but, battling with the ardour of youth, with the sanguineness of an untried courage too young to know defeat, the nucleus of what was to be in the future a fairly-developed station evolved itself slowly out of the primitive elements of trackless bush and unwatered grass-lands.

It was there, in this unpromising field of labour, that I made the acquaintance of Tamba. I had started from the nearest station for my El Dorado, in command of a caravan of men, drays, horses, stores, and necessaries, with which to attack the primeval tract which had become mine by right of purchase, and make it habitable for man and beast. We had slowly made our way to our destination, each day leaving farther and farther behind us all trace of settlement, penetrating more deeply into the unwatered district in which Nature reigned supreme. Our stages were short and our progress slow; but, at last, we found ourselves in the grassy flat boasting a large water-hole, which, in previous survey, I had determined should be the scene of our first settlement.

It was soon after our arrival in this spot that I made the acquaintance of Tamba. The place was, as I soon found out, a great resort of the aborigines in the rainy season, abounding as it did in all game native to the country; though, during the hot summer months, it was totally deserted on account of the surface-water, which offered a plentiful supply during the winter, drying quickly up under the scorching rays of the summer sun. It was the rainy season that I had taken advantage of in making my first attempt at settlement, and it was the rainy season that brought a great number of the native blacks, from far and near, for the purpose of hunting.

Most of those had received a slight veneer of civilisation, those especially who

had come to retire, temporarily, from irksome employment as shepherds and stockmen on those "little worlds of toil," the neighbouring stations; throwing off the restraints of labour, and trusting solely to dog, spear, and boomerang for the means of existence. Others there were who, scorning the patronage of the white man altogether, lived a roaming life on the banks of the neighbouring rivers, and who, when the supply of surface-water permitted, were wont to push back to less favourably watered regions, finding the summer's drain of game impoverish their customary river hunting-grounds.

But it was to the former class Tamba belonged. She herself was a half-caste child of about twelve or thirteen, when I first made her acquaintance. She came under the care of a black fellow and his "gin," and was accompanied by a half-caste boy—evidently her brother.

This dusky family was the first contingent of coloured humanity that made its appearance in our midst. They came upon us quite suddenly, the woman carrying the portable property of the family, consisting of three discoloured blankets, a water-bag, and what is typically called in the bush a billy, otherwise a can for the making of tea; the man walking proudly ahead, uncontaminated by burthen other than tomahawk, boomerang, and spear. Without the slightest parley or hesitation they came up to our camp-fire, and both man and wife producing short, discoloured clay pipes, lighted them with a glowing ember. After a few preliminary whiffs, the black fellow turned and addressed me.

"Me Boman Jimmy. That Sal, wife belongin' me. That Tamba, little feller girl. That Jimmy-Jimmy, little feller boy. We've come stop along; you. Me been shepherdin' alonga Woolero," a neighbouring station, as I knew. "You got backer? Gimme some. Baal," a negative employed almost universally by Australian natives, "baal, me got any."

They camped near us that night, and the next day Mr. Boman Jimmy came up and offered the services of himself and family for the consideration of "tucker" (that is, daily rations of food) for himself and constituents; to which I agreeing—as I could employ him and the boy in looking after the horses and getting bark for building purposes, and the woman in looking after the camp domestic drudgery—it came about that Mr. Boman Jimmy and his

family became hangers-on in my primitive household.

The children—I do not know how they came to look upon the black fellow and his wife as their parents, for, as I have said, they were both half-castes and, necessarily, partly of other parentage—the children soon settled down in their new sphere, and proved the life and spirit of our encampment. They were not black, nothing like their immediate protectors, and having white blood in their veins, showed it by a lightening of the dusky complexion and a European regularity of feature, that made them as different from Boman Jimmy and his good lady as the first shades of evening are from the black clouds of night. The girl Tamba was even lighter in complexion than her brother, and possessed features that were little short of beautiful. She was a tall, lithe girl, with a sweep of limb a sculptor would have delighted to model; a freedom and grace of motion that a wild, untrammelled life such as hers would alone have engendered; and a happy, childish, ingenuous manner totally at variance with the taciturn stolidity natural to the tribes amongst which she dwelt. Her brother, Jimmy-Jimmy, was a good-looking, sturdy boy, intelligent, and extremely fond of his sister.

From the time these two children made our encampment their home, the grassy flat became the scene of a veritable bush idyl. The happy voices of the two children could be heard from morning to night, making the gloomy woodlands gay with their joyous laughter. The whole place seemed to be enlivened, and wore a brighter aspect from their presence. Even the workmen—rough bush pioneers—seemed to derive pleasure from their harmless gaiety. I never heard a harsh or unkind word spoken to either the boy or girl by any one of them; and some of the men I had with me were of the roughest and most uncouth. There was an inexplicable charm in the presence of these happy children in the drear surroundings in which we held place. There was such an absence of outside influences, such a dearth of ought to amuse or interest beyond our usual daily employments, that the slightest incident or experience standing apart from our rough toil could not fail to be heralded with pleasure and interest. And so, almost unconsciously, a certain poetic glamour came to surround Tamba and Jimmy-Jimmy, in the minds of all of us; and the two played,

and sang, and romped, and made the bush re-echo their happy laughter undisturbed and unhidden.

On occasions they would go together far a-field on hunting expeditions, after 'possums, iguanas, and kangaroo, accompanied by two or three gaunt dogs, half kangaroo-hound, half dingo; and then who so wildly happy as Tamba, who so formidable-looking as Jimmy-Jimmy? Then there were marauding expeditions, after emu and native-companion eggs, to be undertaken, and long delicious searches after wild fruits—quondongs, limes, nuts, and so on. And then there were toothsome edible roots to be dug up with pointed yam-sticks; the wild potato, binil-root, and many others; and above and beyond all, the delicious yam-like root of the curajong tree, termed by appreciative settlers bush cocoa-nut. All these searches the two tanned little hunters zealously prosecuted, never returning empty-handed, always tired and weary, but full of the day's sport, and eagerly planning fresh expeditions for the morrow.

And then the twenty horses I had brought with me required constant attention lest they should be straying away, and had to be run up into the temporary stock-yard morning and evening. That was the children's happiest time; that was the time for excitement and emulation, when Jimmy-Jimmy and Tamba, each perched on a charger without saddle and bridle, would go careering to and fro with a native grace of horsemanship that was born in both, driving up the unwilling horses with shouts and the lusty cracking of stock-whips. And, when the horses were yarded, it was something quite idyllic to see the two going from one to another, patting, stroking, and caressing each one. Tamba especially seemed to be fond of them, and would press her tanned little face caressingly against soft muzzles and silky skins, and talk tenderly and lovingly, so that whenever I saw her, I used to think the picture the scantily-clothed child made amongst the horses, one of the prettiest and quaintest I had ever seen.

And so with the two fled the happy, sunshiny days, all too short for enjoyment, bright and joyous every one; each morning bringing no cares, each night setting for them without sigh or sorrow.

With us and our work time went more slowly. But gradually and surely I saw rising around me the works of our hands and the results of our enterprise.

Time, which waits for no man, had revolved for over a year and a half when I noticed a change in the appearance and conduct of my two protégés. The boy was then about sixteen years, and had sprung up into a well-grown, active young fellow, agile and expert above his years. Tamba, too, had stepped, almost at a stride it seemed to me, from girlhood into maidenhood. My little woodland nymph had, almost imperceptibly, blossomed into a woman. The childish games were abandoned; the thoughtless fun and frolic were at an end. Tamba gave her attention now to more advanced, if not more womanly, pursuits. She delighted in hunting. Accompanied only by four or five gaunt dogs, as wild-looking and untamed as herself, she would scour the bush all round for miles, hunting the larger game, kangaroo and emu. Many a time have I watched the dusky Diana, as she set out on the day's expedition, tomahawk in hand, striding across the grassy woodlands with a step as bounding, an eye as flashing, and a figure as lithe and erect as the goddess of the chase herself possessed.

Tamba was not severe in her taste for dress. She did not like long garments; probably she found them a hindrance to freedom of movement. She was wont to cut her skirts lamentably short. To the degradation of boots, shoes, or stockings she never descended; and her head was never covered except by the thatch of abundant dark-coloured hair that crowded it. And so she would flash by, followed by her canine train, with a sparkle of her bright eyes, a gleam of her white teeth, a sweep of her short, flowing, and generally discoloured skirts, and a glow of colour from a crimson scarf she was accustomed to wear knotted loosely round her waist—a vision of wild, untrammelled, hardy, unfeminine-like grace, as goddess-like as was hers who was enamoured of the shepherd of Mount Latmoa.

But with it all, happy as the girl was in her innocence, it seemed to me a pitiful fate for her to fritter away her womanhood in pursuits so unworthy—to pass her years in total ignorance of everything save what her hardy bush life taught her. For, as I have said, she had white blood in her veins, and was intelligent and prepossessing to a remarkable degree. She could speak English fairly, could sew, and possessed many little womanly traits that were natural to her, and stood out in bold relief against the grosser natures of her

black companions; though, alas! it must be confessed, her early training had done its utmost to counteract any little feminine refinements her partly white parentage had engendered. She loved her black companions—for quite a large number had collected in the vicinity, and were encamped about—and although I tried to keep her and her mother separate, I found it of no avail. Every night they made their camp in the midst of the blacks, and joined in their nightly revelry of whooping, dancing, and corroborseing. Tamba, too, loved 'possums and iguanas, and even snakes—that is, to eat them—and it was sufficient cooking for her if they were just thrown on the wood ashes and merely warmed through. She did not love work or tasks that kept her attention fixed for more than a few minutes together; in short, outside her one pleasure of hunting, she was most ineradicably lazy.

But a chance was offered her of improvement.

On the nearest station some fifty miles away, the manager had been hardy enough to bring his wife and child to live with him. It was a dreary fate for a lady to have to face the hardships of an existence so cut off from social, almost human intercourse, such as life in these outside regions meant. But love in her case had been sufficient to conquer all other desires, and she had resolved—and carried out that resolve nobly—to face by her husband's side the trials and hardships of the life he had undertaken. The care of the child was a severe tax upon her, for she had many and constant household duties to attend to. She had been unable to induce a nurse to accompany her so far afield, and I knew was anxiously looking out for me to aid her in her maternal labours.

To see Mrs. Cliffe I made a special journey, and drew a picture so glowing of Tamba in her wild innocence and savage grace, that her interest was vividly aroused, and she declared herself willing to take the girl in her household, clothe her decently, and endeavour to bend her untutored spirit into the unaccustomed grooves of civilisation. In short, as she expressed it, "she would try and make a decent Christian of her."

With Tamba herself and her immediate protectors, Boman Jimmy and Sal, my interview was lively, if not actually stormy. At first the girl flatly refused to leave her friends and the home to which she was so much attached, and the father and mother

were equally opposed to the plan. But I had been accustomed to exact implicit obedience from the natives under every circumstance, for I had the power of turning them all adrift from the spot on which they had settled, and which they seemed to regard with some affection. I had likewise, by judicious presents of tobacco, tea, sugar, and flour, gained a certain ascendancy over them, and had even attained a slight moral elevation in their eyes by the practice of healing arts, through the administration in most cases of such patent medicines as I had brought with me—notably, Holloway's, Cackle's, and various ointments. So that in the end I persuaded the parties interested to fall in with the arrangement, and Tamba departed for her first inculcation in ways of life domestic, respectable, and orthodox.

As the weeks went by, whenever I happened to be in the neighbourhood, I made it a point to call in at the station and interview Mrs. Cliffe as to Tamba's progress in the ways of righteousness. But alas! I found my good offices in having severed her from her wild life were likely to prove abortive. Mrs. Cliffe complained terribly of her.

"The girl hasn't a bad nature," she said, "but she's a terrible charge. She's very loving with little Dolly," that was the child, "and that's what makes me overlook many other things. She'll sit half the day with the baby in her arms, crooning over her and talking to her in the most fantastic style. But then she's so very curious, you know, and so lazy, and flighty. She won't work, otherwise than care for little Dolly. She won't help in the household duties at all; and then every now and again she goes away, and I never see her perhaps for a couple of days. She says she gets tired, and must go hunting—just fancy that! And then the curious things she does. I gave her a very nice little room for her own, just outside the house, but with a door leading in, so that she should be under my eye. But she never sleeps in the bed—never will. She stretches her blanket on the floor, and lies on that. And then she keeps all kinds of curious things there—'possums, lizards, and roots, and things; and I once found even a snake. But the worst of it is," continued the kind-hearted lady, "she will go down to the camp and stop with the blacks whenever she can get an opportunity. And then they come up here after her. Once I found seven of the dirtiest, nastiest, ugliest

old gins," "gin" or "lubra" is the generic title of all married black women in Australia, "from the camp in her room, all sitting on the floor in a circle, smoking dirty clay pipes, and Tamba was smoking, too. And then she's fearfully dirty. I can't keep her clean. It's no use giving her a decent dress; she no sooner has one than it's not fit to be seen. She tears everything she has directly she gets it. I don't know what to do with her, I'm sure."

From Tamba herself—looking, I thought, particularly neat and becoming in her modest print gown—I heard a different story.

"All too much work," she said, with a gleam of her bright eyes and a pout of her full lips. "All day too much work. All day in house. Sweep. Look after piccaninny. Fetch 'um water. Clean 'um room. No good all that. Missie Cliffe too much talk. Baal that any good."

And she broke into a long tirade of complaints and grievances in a most energetic manner.

Of course I tried to reason with her, and exhorted her to try and persevere. Indeed I gained a half promise from her that she would; but very shortly after she broke the Gordian knot of the difficulty by running away.

She made her appearance one morning, to my surprise, in her old home at my settlement, shorn of all her respectability, clad in a dirty gown, without any covering on her head or feet; in exactly the same style as she had been wont to go about before the days of her trial at domesticity. She came up to me, seemingly unconscious that she had done wrong, happy in her newly-found freedom, dirty and wild-looking as she had ever been.

She smiled engagingly, and showed her gleaming teeth as she said:

"Me come back."

"So I see, Tamba," I answered gravely.

"What have you come for?"

"Me run away," she said, showing every white tooth in her head, and at last laughing outright. "Too much work alonga Missie Cliffe. No good too much work. Me ran away."

And in fact that was all I could ever get out of her. She positively refused to go back again under any circumstances; refused to do anything but idle the days away amongst her black companions, and, in short, became as demoralised and untutored as though she had never had a

short experience of respectability and propriety.

It was shortly after this that Tamba changed her condition in another sense of the word. One morning she came up to me, and without unnecessary preface, said with a flash of her white teeth, which generally accompanied most of her statements:

"Me going to be married."

There was an unsophisticated ingenuousness in the admission that was almost comical; but I had become indifferent to the girl and her fate, seeing little hope of reclaiming her after the futility of the first attempt, so I made little or no inquiry into the matter. But married she was, and that without much delay. As to the nature or character of the ceremony, I am in total ignorance, for Tamba absented herself from the camp for a few days and returned in the character of a married woman. Her husband was a stalwart black fellow, known as Powrie Charlie—a man whom I had employed in stripping bark for building purposes. He seemed to be very fond of his youthful bride, and, taking all things into consideration, Tamba began her married life under favourable circumstances. I made the young couple a wedding present of a pair of new blankets, two gleaming billy-cans, and for the bride herself a gaily-coloured print gown. And so they set up house-keeping.

But alas! after the first novelty of the change had died away, things did not go so smoothly for the young couple as could have been wished. Tamba developed a new trait in her character, love of admiration; which, with another which was the girl's dominant characteristic—impatience under control—engendered in Powrie Charlie's mind a counter feeling as strong and powerful, a feeling of jealousy. It was the man's nature to be overbearing and tyrannous, and this, I think, was the main cause of the frivolity and unwifely tendencies Tamba very soon developed.

The large camp of the natives, situated some five hundred yards from our own settlement, became all too often the scene of riot and disturbance. Tamba courted admiration, and her husband resented it; that was the cause. Fights took place almost every evening between the jealous husband and one or more of Tamba's admirers; the girl herself came in for a good deal of bad treatment at Powrie Charlie's hands; and for some time there

were continual noise and disturbance. My own "boy," Jimmy-Jimmy, became mixed up in the affair too; for he would fight like a tiger in defence of his sister. It is true that little serious damage was done, for all their warfare was carried on by means of waddies—that is, short clubs—which they constantly carried; and the head being the principal object of attack, and being in all cases of preternatural thickness, the utmost damage done was a bruising of scalps and a letting out of some hot blood. But the noise and riot proceeding from the camp almost all through the night was unbearable, and several of the quieter and older natives coming to me in complaint, I felt it incumbent to put down the nuisance as effectually as possible. Mere talking I found to be no good, it resulted in only temporary respite; so one evening when the disturbance was louder than usual, gun in hand and accompanied by a faithful henchman, I made my way over to the camp and summoned the delinquents before me.

Powrie Charlie came, waddy in hand, with a brow as black as thunder. Tamba came, wild-eyed and panting, with the blood trickling from a wound in the forehead, which I could see had been caused by a blow from a waddy. Jimmy-Jimmy came, with his eyes flashing fire, clutching a heavy axe-handle.

Without further preface I delivered my verdict—husband and wife must leave the camp with the morrow, and never return. But Tamba burst into tears, and flatly refused. She said she was frightened to go with her liege lord, that she hated him, and wanted to stop with Jimmy-Jimmy and her mother. I was somewhat at a loss what to do, for I could see the girl was terrified at the idea; and I knew well enough that she would meet with rough treatment at the hands of her husband, if she was not absolutely injured or even murdered. But I made up my mind that one, if not both, must go, for the sake of peace and quietness; so, turning to the scowling Powrie Charlie, I bade him roughly go and never return, under penalty of being shot. There was a vast amount of jabbering, and some show of resistance, at this arbitrary dismissal; but the natural instinct of obedience to a stronger will, and the knowledge that I would keep my threat, ultimately prevailed: and the element of discord was thrust forth from the camp, never to return. And so peace and concord reigned once again in

our primitive settlement, and things went on much more satisfactorily than they had done previous to my somewhat arbitrary interposition.

In the course of time, Tamba became a mother, and then a change, great and complete, seemed wholly to revolutionise her character. She altered in a wonderful manner. The wildness of her disposition vanished; her frivolity and want of decorum were forgotten; she became, all at once, womanly, motherly, docile, and tractable.

How she did love the dusky imp that called her mother! Her days were spent in tending the child; she seemed to have neither ears nor eyes for anything else. She used to separate herself during the day almost entirely from her fellows, and sit crooning to the child, and petting it, and showing her affection in every conceivable way. Nothing pleased her more than to see the piccaninny admired; nothing delighted her more than to dress it and trick it out in the most gaudy tags and remnants she could lay her hands on. She used to bring the yelling little brat almost every day for me to admire and watch its progress, and a few words of admiration on my part would open all the floodgates of her eloquence in bursts of maternal pride. She certainly was a most devoted mother; which was all the more surprising, for, as a rule, the dusky mothers of the bush are wont to let their offspring scramble into maturity the best way they can. But with Tamba, if her ugly piccaninny was ill or out-of-sorts, she was inconsolable; if it was happy and doing well, she was all smiles and laughter. She was still accustomed to take occasional long rambles in the bush, always carrying her cherished offspring with her; more for the sake, I think, of being able to admire the child in strict privacy, than for any other reason, for she never indulged in hunting at that time, further than to procure an occasional 'possum or 'guana for her mid-day meal.

But a great misfortune was to overshadow her life before her dusky babe had opened its eyes many months in the little sphere of bush-world that bounded it.

I had been out one day far afield, searching after some of the horses which had strayed away from about the camp during the night, and was returning without having caught a glimpse of them or their tracks, when, some three miles from our encampment, shrill sounds of lamentation

attracted my attention. I recognised the cry at once. It was the piercing notes of mourning the blacks give utterance to on the death of one of their number. I rode over to the spot whence the sounds proceeded, and discovered Tamba stretched out prone on the ground under a ragged honeysuckle tree, uttering heart-broken cries of distress. I dismounted, and raised her up; but there was little occasion to question, for by her side lay her few-months-old child, cold and stark, with the blood oozing from a fearful wound in the head.

It was some time before I could glean any information from Tamba as to the nature of the tragedy, for she was so overcome with grief, so wildly hysterical and vehement, that I really thought sorrow had turned her brain.

I never learnt the full particulars of the tragedy. Tamba was always reticent about it, even when all sorrow for her loss had passed from her mind; but from her broken sentences I gleaned that she, whilst rambling about with the child, met her husband, Powrie Charlie, armed with boomerang, waddy, and spear, evidently out on a hunting expedition; that high words had passed between them; and that he had violently demanded that she should accompany him to where he was camped, and resume wifely relations. She had refused, Tamba said hysterically, and he had tried to force her, which, she resisting, in a fit of passion and jealousy he had struck at her with his waddy, hitting the child a savage blow on the head. But whether it was done by accident or design, she could not say. She did not remember anything more before my arrival. Powrie Charlie must have fled; but she knew of nothing further than her great loss.

Such was Tamba's broken story. But, pitiable as the tragedy was at the time, it turned out to be a blessing that proved a turning point in her life. For the time being, however, her grief was inconsolable. She took the defunct piccaninny home with her; plastered her face, hands, and feet all over with mud; made a species of rough bark coffin, or case, for the body; and mourned long and sincerely after true aboriginal fashion.

She received great sympathy from all hands. The rough bushmen and workmen showed their sense of pity in many ways. One and all swore to put a bullet in the cowardly murderer if he ever made his

appearance in the camp; and many kind words were said, and little presents made, to the bereaved mother.

Her brother Jimmy-Jimmy, however, took a different line of action. One day he took boomerang and waddy, and, girding up his loins, disappeared mysteriously from the camp for several days. When he returned, I knew what he had been after; but, though I questioned him closely, he never would admit the truth. That he had been to avenge his sister's wrongs I knew, and that he had succeeded I knew also; but whether he had clubbed his enemy to death, or speared him, or what, I never could learn. However, it was a sinister fact that Powrie Charlie was never seen again; so that, in my mind, the result of Jimmy-Jimmy's expedition was only too evident.

Poor Tamba! Her grief was profound. It was actually pitiable to see her for some time after her loss, she wore such a hopeless, spiritless look, and seemed so utterly prostrated in mind and body. But, as is always the case, even the deepest maternal grief must find alleviation, and Tamba's, in the ordinary sequence of events, succumbed to time and forgetfulness.

But she was an altered woman ever afterwards. The depths of her nature had been plumbed—affliction and distress in her worked good, because they conquered and absorbed the frivolity and savagery of her nature. Some month or so after the death of the child, she came up to me of her own accord, and asked me to try and get her again the situation she had filled before in Mrs. Cliffe's household. She was sure she would like it now, and would try hard to please.

She holds the situation of nurse there now, and is spoken of in the highest terms by her mistress, whenever I happen to see or hear from that lady. All the affection she had for her own child seems to be transferred to little Dolly. Tamba has developed into a solicitous, trustworthy, respectable nurse. She is quite a travelled woman, too; for she has been down in her capacity of nurse, to Sydney and Melbourne with Mr. and Mrs. Cliffe, and has had her mind wonderfully expanded by all she has seen. So that, what with her love for her protectors, and her obedience, intelligence, and industry, as Mrs. Cliffe says, Tamba is in a fair way of becoming—if she has not already become—quite a Christian.

ROUGHING IT ON THE LOMONDS.

AND so, Petrea, you are wondering what has become of us?

We are "gone away" like the fox, and have not been run to earth yet. People have been asking, you say, whether we are in the Highlands, or by the sea-side, or if we have crossed the Channel, or emigrated, or what possible corner of the earth we are to be found in?

Don't tell them, Petrea. We are having a glorious time of it, but if we were to hear even a whisper of a proposed invasion by any of the worshippers of "les convenances," we should take flight to the wilderness of rabbit-warrens near at hand, and be heard of no more. We are in full possession of the sweets of liberty for the time being, and I'll tell you how we have distanced Mrs. Grundy, if you will keep our secret.

Well, my dear, we are "roughing it" on the Lomonds, just over the one-thousand-foot line, far from the haunts of men, and bakers' carts. Think of this as you sit on the hot beach, and listen to the discordant bray of a German band! Think of the sweep of the "caller air" over the heather; think of the luxury of lying on the soft springy, natural turf, and lazily letting the eyes wander for miles below, over fields, and woods, and villages, away to the coast-line, far, far beneath, where the sunlight shows the "silver sea," and the Bass Rock, and the ships sailing up the Forth. But one is too much alive up here for laziness, and to us now, it is far more delightful to be off day after day on some quest—either for white heather, mushrooms, or blackberries, or wickedly to "gump" trout in the clear brown streams. We array ourselves in garments of an ancient date and cut—things that can't spoil; and away we go, over bog and moor, stone dykes or crags, to return, as the evening closes in, laden with the spoil of some sort—either useful or ornamental.

The place of our abode—at night, or in rainy weather—is a deserted farm-house, standing under the slope of a hill, and sheltered on the other side by a thick clump of trees; while down towards the south runs the sunny steep incline of the kitchen-garden, between old grey walls, with perfect hedges of box borders. The farm "toun"—as they call the yard and outbuildings—is really extensive. A great square of stables, cowsheds, barns, and

granaries, fronts the kitchen door, but the grass is growing thick under foot; not a horse is to be seen in the stables; the barns are empty; the cowstalls are shut up, except when the shepherd's one beast comes in at night; and a solitary pig lives a retired and reflective life in a sty removed from his kind by many a mile.

The shepherd and his wife are the only occupants of the house, of which they inhabit two rooms, and the rest are left to fall into ruin, just as their owner deserted them, and, taking all his household gods with him, left them to the rats and the mildew.

This is a queer mixture of a description, isn't it? Out of doors, all sunshine and fresh air; the only sounds the gurgling of the wee streams, the bleating of the sheep—which are grazing in hundreds—and the hum of the bees over the heather; and indoors, stillness, gloom, the gnawing of the rats, and the eerie southing of the wind through unused rooms and passages.

Well, that is the way it struck us at first.

We had made a picnic up to the hills, and this place had been described to us as the only one where the horse could be put up anywhere near our destination.

The road to the farm is execrable—almost impossible—and the higher we came, the wilder and more desolate became our surroundings. We passed more than one ruin, where once the sons of the soil had found work to do and roofs to cover them. A farm-house, with empty broken windows and door-places, looks out from between the trees; the mill-stream still flows in its wooden bed, with no wheel to turn; and the cottars' houses stand by the road-side, with no ploughman's foot to cross the threshold, no gudewife by the hearth, and no bairns with their "pieces" in their hands about the door. When we looked at all these dwellings, and saw the rich crop of hay growing in the fields close by, it seemed hard that so many hundreds of acres should yield sustenance only to sheep, when there had been a time when more than a dozen families had lived and thriven on this very hill-side.

Standing on the brae above the house, among the heather, and feeling the cool fresh rush of the breeze upon our faces, we seemed to take in large draughts of the wine of life; to feel bigger, stronger somehow, more capable of taking hold of things in general; and the same idea seems to have occurred to D. and me at the same time.

"What a splendid place this would be to freshen up body and mind, if we could only stay here for a while!"

We consulted together over the possibilities, over the difficulties of getting supplies for the pulpit, and for the dinner table; over the headaches that had attended sermon-writing, and the longing we all felt for an out-of-door life; and then we went into the farm-house and surveyed.

A big dining-room, with long windows and splendid views; gray ashes on the rusty hearth; and an old gun on the mantel-piece; and dark stains on the floor. D. looked at me with a queer droop at the corners of his mouth.

"Wants scrubbing," said I, alluding to the floor; "the grate wants cleaning, and so do the windows, but it would be a capital room then."

He seemed to feel rather despondent while we inspected the rest of the rooms; but I did not give in.

"We'll get a cartload of furniture up, and clean it out, and make it at least as good as a weather-proof tent. We'll only bring our German maid Gustel to help us, and we shall solve the greatest mystery of the age: how to leave home for a real holiday without expense; for surely they cannot want much rent for this place."

D. smiled. "After our experiences in the Highlands last year," said he, "I believe they would want rent for a packing-case, or a stone sarcophagus."

"But not on the Lomonds."

"We shall see."

And so we did, for to our joy we discovered that the possessor of the sheep-farm was a friend of our own, who looked upon the farm-house very much as a kind of lumber; and was very willing to lend it to us as long as we liked, and would not hear of payment. So in double-quick time, seeing the season was so far advanced, and in secrecy—that no respectable neighbours might hear of our doings, and be politely surprised that we thought of existing in such a style, or rather in such a want of style—we packed up most of our absolute necessities, such as beds, and one table, a saucepan, a frying-pan, and a tea-kettle, and away we came. The luggage in an enterprising carrier's cart; and we, some riding, some walking, all in a hurry to get rid of civilised life.

Oh, Petrea, how you would have laughed if you had seen our first "settling in!"

Our house-warming consisted in a dinner

which we gave to the carter, and to receive which he calmly ensconced himself on a cushioned seat by the fire, with his hat on and his pipe in his mouth, while I cooked the bacon and eggs. Gustel (the maid) was horrified at this, though her stolidity is proof against most things. But John had intended to be perfectly polite: the pipe was merely to show that he was in no hurry; and, as for the hat, why, who thinks of lifting that in Fife, much less sitting without it? I so often see the men sitting in their cottages with their hats on, that I think perhaps they sleep in them.

Our unpacking proceeded, and, amidst mingled mirth and dismay, it was found that we had brought no looking-glass whatever, except one inch in the back of a pocket-comb. D. announced joyfully that he would never shave again. The others were equally stoical; but at the end of three days we were all getting so hideous that we had to borrow one from the shepherd's wife, at which glass, being placed in a conspicuous position, we all take it in turns to adorn ourselves.

Then the fender had been forgotten, and there was an obvious tendency on the part of our little son to walk undismayed into the hot ashes, and take the tea-kettle by the nose.

But genius—true genius—is equal to any emergency.

After a mysterious absence D. arrived, bringing a rustic erection which does double duty—as fender and fire-guard. He had found a quantity of fir-wood, which he was allowed to use as he liked; so he set to work, and produced a hall table, and clothes-rack, a kitchen table, and—crowning wonder!—a sideboard.

This work of art, also constructed of fir-wood, still in the bark, looms large and majestic, in a kind of petticoat or flounce of bright yellow satteen, which conceals the boots of the household, and drapes the nether extremities of the sideboard, leaving only about two inches of very rough brown wooden legs exposed.

That piece of resplendent satteen, poked into a trunk with a hope that it would turn out useful somehow, raises the sideboard to the level of a Roman Catholic village altar, and no mortal could enter the room dominated by this ornamental and very useful piece of furniture, and say that we were admirers of the commonplace.

D.'s appearance at the wood-pile, with his eye-glass, clerical collar, red fez, short jacket, and long saw is unique.

Seeing that jugs and wash-basins are at a premium, and yet retaining too many of our ancient prejudices to be completely satisfied with a wet, rough-towel scrubbing in the mornings, a procession of the faithful has been inaugurated, which takes place daily, while the ham is being frizzled in the dining-room.

D. comes first, bearing mugs—glasses being a luxury we do not possess—brushes, soap, etc.; J. follows with towels and sponges; then comes W., proud bearer of a tin basin; and I bring up the rear with my little son and heir, who is usually on these occasions in a state of uproarious delight, openly defying the ducks, and making game of King Chanticleer himself, though a grunt from the pig, and the sight of an unclean snout fills his little soul with terror.

So round the farm we go, down by the grassy road behind the out-houses to the spring, where it bursts clear and fresh out of the old dyke below the hill.

Ah, Petrea! the lazy luxury of the possessor of an æsthetic jug and basin, with all the impossible flowers on them that ever danced before the eyes of a demented Japanese, cannot touch the delight of that pure cold stream which we catch as it comes gushing out from between the grey boulders—swaying the heads of the ferns to and fro with the force of its flow, and filling the cups of the delicate green lichens with diamonds. The sheep on the other side of the dyke look up in timid wonderment, as our shouts of delight, or gasps at the shock of the cold water over head and ears, fill the air.

But there are no discordant sounds; no clanging of hotel bells; no shrill cries from fish or newspaper vendors; no horrible railway whistle comes up to trouble the wholesome quiet, so delicious to tired nerves.

It is so clear that, miles away, we see the tall chimneys of the towns on the coast-line, and away beyond the Forth lie the cornfields of the Lothians, the Lammermoor Hills, and the Pentlands.

"How glorious the Loch will be after breakfast!" says one.

"True enough," says another, "but how glorious breakfast will be first!" And he points to where Gustel stands, with a big apron enveloping her solid proportions, and a welcoming smile on her broad cheeks.

After breakfast a grand stampede is made round the corner of the hill to where Loch

Leven, with its eleven islands, lies in dazzling brightness before us.

Down we go through the woods where the raspberry gatherers are hard at work, and on to the shore of the Loch in search of a boat.

Once found, we are soon floating over the sunny calm of its waters, while the actual hard facts of Queen Mary's imprisonment in the ruined castle are discussed, and we try to separate truth from romance, and the Mary Stuart of Sir Walter Scott's imagination from the Mary Stuart now so hated by many of the descendants of her liege subjects.

And so the time wears on, each day treading on the heels of the next, making us feel how short our holiday is, and determining us to profit by our discovery of how to "rough it" in the future.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER VII.

It did not seem quite so possible in the cold, practical light of the morning, when John Temple swallowed his coffee, and buttoned his great-coat before facing the November rigours. He always breakfasted alone, and sometimes even prepared the meal himself, when the little servant had slept late and forgotten him. It was people's way to forget John, and it was his way to let them do it. It is your vixenish, ill-conditioned person who is best served, most eagerly waited on, most implicitly obeyed.

Sarah never forgot her mistress's breakfast tray, nor failed to assist at Jessie's slow and painful toilet. "But as for master, bless you, you might leave his bed unmade till night, his room undusted for a week, and he would never complain!"

And yet this same John upon whose good-nature everybody imposed; who ate cold mutton with cheerfulness; who took his breakfast bacon without mustard rather than trouble some one to make it for him; who hardly grumbled audibly when the tea was lukewarm, and the milk scanty; this same John who had rated himself for his thoughtlessness last night—did he not again transgress? Was he not on the following night late also, and did he not once more return without the healthy appetite he usually brought to bear upon the high-tea waiting at home to be eaten?

For it is with high-tea that Rosebery Terrace greets its returning husbands, fathers, and brothers. A walk up the little street about seven o'clock is almost as stimulating as a promenade among the seventeen satisfying odours of Cologne. Behind every little bow window, a teapot is steaming; from every little kitchen arises a savour of roast and boiled, of stewed and fried. As each householder turns in at his own particular gate, you can tell to a dead certainty, without being a magician, what will occupy his leisure during the next half-hour. Paterfamilias will have it all his own way; he will eat and he will drink, while mamma and the young ones, who have dined frugally at one o'clock, will nibble at bread and butter to keep him company.

For John, too, there was spread a good tea, a better tea than usual, as with the last nodded good-night, he parted from his comrades of the City, and passed under his own roof. Why then should he have gone with a hanging head—an abstracted, one might almost say a furtive air?

"You don't seem to have much appetite, John," said Jessie almost with resentment. When there was anything specially good to eat, it was selfish of John not to be hungry.

"Perhaps the cutlet is tough?" she said, as if daring him to make this assertion.

"It is excellent—most tender," he hastened to assure her. "Won't you let me give you just a morsel—?"

She waved the proposal aside so authoritatively that he ended his persuasions precipitately.

"You know I never touch meat at night," she said. "A nice example it would be for Sarah if I were to begin taking hot suppers—after the struggle I've had with her about her beer. She would demand bacon for breakfast next."

John's appetite, or lack of it, and Sarah's appetite and its excess—it knew no lack—were fertile and oft-threshed topics on Jessie's lips; when you have but a very narrow little world to dwell in, you scan and criticise its details with a minuteness impossible to those who can claim a larger sphere.

John had the City's mighty pulses to set his own a-throbbing, and the humours of his fellow-citizens to amuse him in his quiet way; Jessie's world had but two inhabitants—John and Sarah, Sarah and John; on these were the frequent changes rung.

To-night, it was Sarah, her delinquencies, her airs, her defiance in the matter of caps, her latest breakage; and he was meanly, while yet ashamedly, glad of it.

It did Sarah—who was skilled in self-defence—no harm, and it sheltered him from reluctant confession. For had he not haunted the tea-shop in the Brompton Road? Had he not, to cover his restlessness, his glances at the door, his starts of expectancy, invested in pie to an extent that surprised the waitress, whom it might seem nothing would astonish? He had lingered over his meal, he had given to each bite more than the deliberation of a Gladstone, and had gone, after all, unrewarded.

No Tilly, blushing rose-red under the many glances, no Uncle Bob, loudly cheerful and happily assertive, was there. They had passed into another world, and as he went his way, he wondered at his folly in dreaming that the meeting on which he built so many vague hopes might take place here. Was a lady who inhabited a mansion in Prince's Gate—a Mrs. Popham, with silken-calved, powder-locked footmen, likely to encourage her guests to haunt an eating-house in the Brompton Road—an eating-house where pie, where tripe, where saveloys, where shrimps in their season were consumed by the little clerk and the little shop-girl? To another world, indeed, had Miss Tilly fled—a world where the cups were of Sèvres, the salvers of gold, the footmen gentlemen of high degree.

"Actually the milkman, when only last week I had spoken about the baker, and threatened to write to his mistress—John, you're not listening; you're not attending to a word I say," came in sharp accents from the sofa.

"Yes, my dear, yes," said John, guilty and conscience-stricken. "You were saying that the baker——"

"I was saying that the baker," mimicked Jessie—"well, what was I saying about the baker? Of course you don't know. You don't know, and you don't care, not you! The house might go to wreck and ruin; Sarah might steal everything we possess; she might set the place on fire and burn us to cinders, before you moved so much as a little finger to help us! I wish you wouldn't sit and stare; if you have nothing to say, and if you don't care to listen when I try my best to entertain you, why don't you take a book? Oh, don't mind me, pray! I'm used to being neglected," cried Jessie, growing mo-

mentarily more excited and hysterical. "I don't expect you to share my troubles, I can bear them alone. Go and smoke, and enjoy yourself; go and moon and dream about that Scotch girl—the girl who is pretty, and lively, and healthy, not sick, and old, and ugly before her time, like me. Oh, you think I don't know! You think I can't guess where your thoughts are while you sit and stare, and never listen to a word I say!"

John had a pretty bad quarter of an hour after this. Perhaps he thought he deserved it, and thus summoned patience and forbearance. He could not take this entertainment that Jessie provided for him humorously; he found nothing sprightly or amusing in her impotent anger; no pleasantry in her tears and reproaches. When cousin Fred came, as he did when he wanted John's help in any matter, it was as good as a comedy for him to find Jessie in one of her rages. To him it was an excellent joke—material for laughter, and banter, and chaff—but not so to John. To him the comedy was old—old and stale, and sad as a weight of lead at his heart.

Yet, will it be believed that this same John, who spent an evening in bitterness of spirit, in contrition and repentance, happy when Jessie tardily and grudgingly forgave him, yielded once again to temptation? Oh, pretty faces, oh, smiling looks, what a responsibility is this witching gift of yours!

John, wiser now, forsook the tea-shop. Experience was making him cunning in avoiding detection, and in order to be home in time—to evade, perhaps, that reproachful watch which Sarah kept for him at the gate, that questioning demand in Jessie's hungry eyes—he indulged in the daring extravagance of a hansom from the City to Prince's Gate.

What he meant to do when he got there was not very clear to himself, perhaps. He had but dismissed the man, and was staring at the flood of light that came from the uncurtained windows—hoping, maybe, that a slim figure would flit across that radiance—when a hand fell smartly on his shoulder.

"And what, most worthy cousin, may you be doing here?" laughed Fred, seeming to extract great inward amusement from John's startled, guilty air, as he turned to face the new-comer. "Have you deserted the happy groves of Fulham to worship at Mrs. Popham's shrine? Were

you going to serenade her? Don't let me hinder you."

"Do you know Mrs. Popham?" cried John, too busy with his wonder to pay heed to Fred's pleasantries.

"I have that honour," said Fred, still laughing, "but I didn't know she numbered you among her admirers."

"Stuff!" said John, shaking off his bewilderment; "I never saw the woman in my life. I heard of her from some—some people that I met, that was all. And I thought as I was passing near"—the evasion stuck in his throat—"I'd take a look at the house. Seems very bright and gay," he guiltily tried to speak lightly. "I suppose she has a lot of friends?"

"Friends—friends—has anybody friends in London?" said Fred musingly, following some mental line of his own. "Acquaintances in abundance, in superabundance—acquaintances who come and go, and mostly go, after a time—these she has in common with all of us. But this isn't one of her reception days. All that brilliance is for my sole benefit."

He had taken his cousin's arm, and was pacing the pavement with him. Apparently he was in no great haste to claim his privilege.

"If I had a home like that, now, and lived alone," said John, with what seemed to him quite a brilliant stroke of diplomacy, "I should want to be pretty sociable, and to have people stopping with me—people from the country, and that sort of thing. I dare say Mrs. Popham has country friends visiting her at this time of year?"

"If she has, she manages to conceal them successfully," said Fred, giving but a careless attention. "She's hardly the sort of person to be very fond of country cousins, if she has any. Sorry to destroy your ideal," Fred began to laugh again, "but I'm afraid the Mrs. Popham of your imagination differs somewhat from the Mrs. Popham waiting up there for me. She does not share your benevolent love of antiquated uncles, and venerable aunts, and dowdy old-maid cousins."

"They might be young," corrected John, feeling unaccountably disappointed.

"They might, but that would hardly compensate if they were also provincial. So you are curious about Mrs. Popham, are you, and you would like to see her?" Fred seemed to see something exquisitely comical in this idea. "Well, I'll introduce you some day—nothing easier. One good turn deserves another, and you can

do me a favour, if you like. Odd that I should meet you when I was just thinking of running down to your place to-night."

"Anything I can do," said John, striving after cordiality. Long experience had taught him what a visit from the gay Fred meant. "If it's a matter of a trifling loan——"

"You've hit it on the head. A trifling loan—a mere temporary obligation while waiting for remittances, to put it professionally. Lucky dog you, to be able to lend anybody anything! I couldn't scrape five pounds together to-night to save my dearest friend from the jaws of the destroyer. You don't happen to have a tenner about you, do you?"

"No, not so much, certainly not so much as that." John made a show of feeling in his pockets. "I might manage to let you have it to-morrow, perhaps."

"All right, but it must be early to do any good. One o'clock—you can manage it before one! And about Mrs. Popham," he went on, as the other nodded, "I'll take you there some day, with all the pleasure in life. You will be immensely amused; she's great fun. I'll tell her you are coming, and she'll receive you with open arms. I'd take you with me now, but I've a trifle of business to discuss with her—something she wants me to do for her. Another time——"

"I couldn't go to night, anyhow."

"You're going home to Jessaie, I suppose. How is the fair Jessie?"

"Not very well," said Jessie's brother, suddenly pulled up and confronted with a vision of Sarah's fluttering ribbons and pert face at the gate.

"Jessie in one of her tantrums," Fred commented inwardly. "Well, I mustn't keep you," he said aloud, pausing at the foot of the steps; "we all know what a model brother you are."

"I suppose you come here often?" John asked, with another glance at the lighted panes.

"Depends. Let me see. Was I here yesterday, or the day before?" Fred was not unwilling to hint at his intimacy with this fashionable lady. "Often enough not to forget my promise. I'll look you up

some day in the City, and we'll come together. And you'll remember—to-morrow, one sharp, at latest!"

"All right," said John, turning away once again from the allurements of those lighted windows, and taking the dark November night for his portion. He was not likely to forget the price he had paid for an introduction to Mrs. Popham. Ten pounds is a large slice out of an income that allows of no wide margin for extravagance, and he knew that that hardly-spared sum was not likely to return to his possession when once he had parted with it. Fred, poor fellow, entertained the best intentions in the world; debtors usually do, and expect that these shall be placed to their credit in the settlement of accounts; but intentions, as we all know, are good for nothing but paving-stones to a country where a man's best meanings will not entitle him to any mercy.

Fred, while he took the money, reserved to himself the privilege of thinking his cousin a fool, and perhaps John was never nearer being one than when he yielded to Fred's pleas. He philosophically abandoned all right to the sum in question when he sent it punctually next day. It only meant a little more self-denial on his part: no more hansoms, for instance, or teas in the Brompton Road; but these were easily relinquished. And it might mean—what might it not mean if it opened the gates of Mrs. Popham's paradise to him! For he clung to the belief that the strangers—the strangers who were, as he had almost persuaded himself, his own near kin—were this lady's guests.

They had been invited, and were expected. He had himself seen the door opened and the two pass in; he had even lingered a little, and they had not come out again.

It was simpler to believe that Fred was mistaken. It might easily have been three days, rather than two, since Fred had gone there last; and, if that were so, he could not possibly know of their arrival. Those lights that he arrogantly took for his welcome were for them—for Tilly. If she were not there, where in all this wide wilderness of London could she be!

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 967. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Dorby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER III. THE CHILL OF CHANGE.

DAYS of storm, and chill winds, and heavy rain, followed Adrian Lyle's departure.

Gretchen's time was all her own now. She had nothing to interrupt the monotony of long hours: hours spent with blank face pressed against the window panes, or bent over some dull and instructive book, and only varied by aimless wanderings through the sodden lanes around her lonely dwelling.

Her heart yearned for news of Neale. She would study the papers for intelligence, but they conveyed little comfort to her mind; and since Adrian Lyle had gone, she had no one to speak to on the subject.

"A letter must come soon," she thought, watching with the sickness of hope deferred that brooding sky-line, dark and cheerless as her own life now. But day followed day, and week followed week, and still no message reached her.

She tried to remember the teachings she had lately received, to trust and pray, and lay down the burden of her anxious heart at the footstool of infinite mercy; but it seemed a hard task, and she had not yet mastered the difficulties of a faith which needed not human intervention, and was independent of human aid.

"If he were here!" she would cry often and often in troubled hours of loneliness and doubt. Her soul seemed full to overflowing of thoughts she could not speak; of difficulties she wanted explained; and, having no outlet, she could but shut them into the secret chambers of her heart, and

try to pray as Adrian Lyle had bade her pray.

He wrote to her sometimes; but the words seemed strained and cold, and threw her back upon herself, as it were. Those letters were penned with severe resolution. They were more like words from master to pupil than of friend to friend. Reading them, she could not possibly dream of the tender and enthusiastic nature, the warm sympathies, the generous heart that would fain have poured itself out before her had it dared. Often she closed the pages with a sigh.

"I must have been a great trouble to him," she thought; "and yet how good and patient he was!"

Gradually as time wore on, and quiet hours of study and of thought ripened her mind, and exercised her judgement, she found herself, almost against her will, comparing the natures of these two men who seemed destined to influence her life. She began insensibly to put Adrian Lyle into Neale Kenyon's place, and to ask herself how he would have behaved under similar circumstances.

For, despite her blind belief in and passionate love for Neale, she could not but acknowledge that, since he had brought her to his own land, his conduct had strangely altered. Was he ashamed of her, that he would not introduce her as his wife to his relatives at Medehurst; that he left her buried here in loneliness and gloom, a prey to weary heartaches and dismal fancies, as yet uncheered by word or message from himself?

Sometimes the little house became a horror to her. In the cold, gloomy days of the waning summer it seemed to chill her with dread, to grow darker and gloomier, as if some mystery breathed in its narrow corridors and empty rooms, and

whispered behind the closed doors which shut her out from all the world of life and love beyond.

She grew impatient of her own folly; but she could not shake it off. Her mind had grown unhinged, and was shaken by storms of intense feeling, which left behind as intense a depression.

Interest in her surroundings, studies, and household duties daily declined. She began to realise, by a process of slow torture, that love was not all in all to a man, as it was to a woman.

She put herself through phases of severe catechism to discover whether any fault of hers had caused this change; but she could find nothing save excess of love, and for that, surely, he would not blame her.

In real truth, Neale Kenyon was going through a period of delirious excitement, which left room for no other thought. He had written his farewells, because his light and selfish nature hated the idea of a distressful scene—of a woman's tears and laments. He had sent Gretchen ample money for the next six months, and he considered he had done his duty to the uttermost. He knew she would miss him, weep for him, pray for him, as all young and tender female creatures do; and the knowledge gave a little touch of sentiment to the closing pages of his romance. For they were closing pages, alas!

Not that he had ceased to love Gretchen, far from it; but mixing with men of the world, and hearing daily from scoffing lips how lightly a woman's reputation is regarded, how poor a trophy seems her love once it is won, he began to think he had done a somewhat foolish thing and to ask himself uneasily, "What would become of Gretchen in the future if—if ever she learnt the truth? She might learn it so easily—a mere accident could reveal it, and then—"a

But at this point he invariably broke off and rushed to billiards, or brandy, or cards, or the society of the wild and fast young fellows who made up the larger portion of the officers of his regiment.

He was not unmindful, not unloverlike; only the present protested against the past, and called it "fancy." That was all.

A man could not go in for sentiment when the graver duties of life were calling for his notice. It was all very well for women; but men were different. So he set his face towards a new land, and talked of glory and danger in a breath, and sent

no word to the longing, aching heart which had spent so much of thought, and passion, and care on him.

"She'll be all right," he told himself, "for a time. I must wait and see how affairs turn out. This war was a splendid chance. Alexis can't bother me here; and as for Gretchen, Bari will let me know all about her. And now 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'!"

It was no wonder, therefore, that Gretchen vainly waited and looked for that letter which never came; though she little suspected that he who should have written it was excusing himself with light and airy falsehoods, deploring gracefully as a folly what to her was ruin; lightly overleaping obstacles and ignoring serious complications as misfortunes which might touch, but certainly ought not to impede him, in his enjoyment as a man of the world, and a soldier of fortune.

He almost succeeded in deceiving himself by the frankness with which he treated the matter, and the philosophical calmness with which he gradually began to regard it. He would never let Gretchen suffer—he would take care of that; but really it was almost a relief to be rid of that extreme high pressure of sentiment which the early days of his love had called forth. He was much more comfortable without it. He had got over the need of that one presence—the craving for sight of face and sound of voice—which is love's earliest delight, and misery.

Had he seen Gretchen again he might have been less complacent and more loving. But he had not done so, and absence, and excitement, and entire change of life had effectively cured the fever and restlessness of passion. A little blank, a tender memory, a chance thought—this was the stage at which he had arrived. No moral earthquake, no conscience-stricken taunts; just a gradual cooling down of temperature moral and physical; a faint tinge of regret, not altogether unpleasant under some moonlit sky ablaze with tropical stars, violet as her eyes when they had looked back to him.

But these were passing shadows, accepted discomforts; not serious or continuous, like that rebellious agony which racked poor Gretchen's soul.

Ere the autumn days had come, for which she looked so hopefully, he had almost forgotten her existence. He was in the thick of bloodshed, hardships, dangers. Life was a round of imperative duties and

daily self-denial. Farther and farther away was pushed that brief little dream of love that was to have been eternal—of memories that were to have outlived life. He never thought of himself as faithless, because as yet he had committed no actual breach of faith. Accusation had not jarred on him; reproach had not disturbed him. It was simply a drifting apart—gradual, and to him painless. Of all it might be to her, he never thought. Memory was not tyrannous to him. He had action and excitement, while she had only stagnation.

There is no doubt that our surroundings help or impede us in the struggles between right and wrong, duty and inclination—no doubt that a man can throw off the oppression of thought far more easily if he is active and strong; can work, smoke, hunt, fight, do any or all of those manifold exploits which call for physical exertion, and are the best panacea for "worries."

Neale Kenyon might have been sensitive to opinion, but none was expressed that could personally affect him. He would have shrunk from Adrian Lyle's contempt, from Gretchen's piteous reproaches; but he was far beyond the reach of either, and his weakness and egotism suffered no shock, nor in any way disturbed him by whispers of the miserable punishment of wrong-doing.

It is not often that a man's own conscience becomes his Nemesis, though preachers and moralists delight in telling us so. It is when his own world, his own surroundings, visit on him the penalty of offences against themselves, give plain names to plain sin, and strip an evil action of its gloss, that the full meaning of his misdeeds stands revealed, and sophistry and excuse look like poor and shredless rags, instead of comfortable covering.

But Neale Kenyon had still his sophistries, and not a shiver of approaching chill disturbed their comfort. His own self-respect was not a tribunal for appeal, and the opinions of others were not likely to be called in question. Every sun that set widened more and more the distance between Gretchen and himself, and one day, as if to add the finishing touch to the barriers he had been erecting, came a letter from Léon Bari:

"It is with some diffidence, Monsieur," he wrote, "that I allude to the delicate subject on which Monsieur was good enough to take me into his valued con-

fidence. Monsieur had scarcely left England, and Madame was still weeping over his farewell letter, when a comforter appeared. It did not surprise me, though it may surprise Monsieur, for I saw many things in Venice and in Rome, to which he was a little blind. The friend of Monsieur—Mr. Lyle—discovered that Madame lived alone in the quiet retreat Monsieur had found for her. He called, merely as a mark of courtesy, no doubt, but unfortunately—accident, which is not always courteous, overtook the kind priest, and left him ill and helpless at Madame's door. Like a good Christian, she took him in and nursed him back to health. Then he removed himself to the village near by, and Madame visited him daily; and he in turn gave her 'spiritual' instruction and counsel, which seemed speedily to console her for Monsieur's absence. Two months passed thus; they parted then, but they correspond regularly. In Monsieur's interests I have observed all this, but for Monsieur's consolation I would say 'women are always thus.' A few tears, a little fret, and then it is the new lover who pushes aside the old. Madame was young, fresh, ingenuous; true—but Monsieur will recollect how eagerly she listened to him—how ready she was to leave home and kindred at his bidding. She is but as all her sex are, when to them is given—opportunity. Well, she was dull, lonely, ennuied, and the handsome priest came, as if from Heaven, to console her. I think Monsieur need have no fears now when the time comes to tell that secret, which must assuredly be told one day. There will be consolation ready for Madame, and Monsieur's conscience may be quite at rest. One word I will say—it is of warning, and I give it but for sake of my devotion to Monsieur, and what may be for his future benefit. The young lady—Miss Kenyon—is somewhat interested also in this Mr. Lyle, and it is not unusual, I believe, for English clergymen to marry rich wives. It would be hard for Monsieur, I think, if the grass were cut under his feet in both his 'affairs' by this priestly rival. But they are dangerous, these religious men, and they do manage to get a great power over the women. Monsieur will pardon the liberty I take, it is entirely in his own interests. The beautiful young heiress is, to my mind, a far worthier object for Monsieur's affections, and I fear, if Monsieur does not announce his engagement, that the priest will win her from him.

Monsieur may say, 'But the priest knows of the secret, and may inform the young lady heiress!' True—but Monsieur may trust that matter to his faithful servant. Nothing is easier than to cut free that entanglement; nothing easier than to present it in its true light to Miss Kenyon—who is after all not the credulous 'ingénue,' and not to be easily shocked at what is of everyday life to a man, young, and handsome, and courted, as Monsieur. Besides, there is always the priest, and the convenient illness. She would excuse Monsieur her cousin, but she would not excuse the saint who had charmed her ear, and represented himself to her as a being great and superior.

"I trust Monsieur will not say I take a too great liberty in putting the matter thus before him. I hope Monsieur enjoys the best of health, and I await Monsieur's instructions, with the assurance that I am his faithful and devoted servant,

"LEON BARI."

This letter at first threw Neale into a violent rage.

That he should neglect and forget Gretchen was one thing; that she should so easily and readily console herself for his absence was another and totally different affair.

He had long disliked Adrian Lylo, as a smaller and lower mind always dislikes one cast in a grander mould, and innately noble and self-sacrificing. He knew well enough that Adrian Lylo was interested, deeply and fervently interested in Gretchen's welfare, and that thought was an added sting to the memory of his own selfishness.

But that he should dare to lift his eyes to Alexis Kenyon—he a mere curate, without influence, without name, or interest, or position—seemed a piece of insolence for which Neale could find no excuse. He remembered what an attraction the young clergyman had seemed to possess for his capricious and critical cousin, and his own dread of any intimacy which might lead to betrayal of his own actions in the past. Was this dread to be realised? Was he to lose both love and lucre at the bidding of this meddler?

The rage and jealousy in his heart swept away the last barrier between himself and an irremediable dishonour. Without further thought or consideration he went to his tent and dashed off two letters: one to Sir Roy, bidding him announce his engage-

ment to Alexis publicly; the other to Bari, saying briefly:

"Explain to 'her' that we must part. Say what you please; but remember I mean to marry Miss Kenyon."

To Gretchen he sent never a word. It was such a comfort to be able to call her fickle, false, contemptible, no wiser, no truer, no better than any other of the light fancies of his selfish youth.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

JUNE.

THE month of June was amongst the Athenians the first month of the year, and by our Saxon ancestors was called "weyd monath," because at this time their cattle were able to feed in the meadows, "weyd" meaning a meadow. It was also termed "mede monath," "midsumor monath," and "lida erra," or the month of the sun's descent. Vossius gives three etymologies to the name—first from "Juno;" second from "jungo," I join, referring to the union of the Romans and Sabines, under Romulus and Titus Tatius; and thirdly from "juniores," young men, Romulus being said to have assigned May to the elders and June to the young.

In the superstitious ages, only two unlucky days were assigned to this month, viz., the seventh and fifteenth, but a modern writer gives three of these bad days, viz., the fourth, tenth, and twenty-second. Indeed, so lucky was the month considered by the Romans, that they looked upon it as the most propitious season of the year for contracting matrimonial engagements, particularly if the day chosen were that of the full moon, or of the conjugation of the sun and moon. As to birthdays, no month could compare with this for fortune. An old poet has thus put into verse its advantages:

Who comes with summer to this earth,
And owes to June her day of birth;
With ring of agate on her hand
Can health, wealth, and long life command.

Unfortunately, it is beyond the power of mortal to choose on which day he or she will be born.

The precious stone especially dedicated to the month was the emerald, which was supposed to ensure happiness in love, and denoted felicity. Notwithstanding this, the emerald was an unlucky article among the Gordons, for

A Gordon in green
Should never be seen.

As to the weather that should characterise the month, we are told that

Calm weather in June
Sets the corn in tune.

This one can understand, but not the next:

If on the eighth of June it rain,
It foretells a wet harvest, men fain.

Yet by a curious law of contrary, we are also assured that

A good leak in June
Sets all in tune.

Youngsters will no doubt express a fervent hope that no rain will fall on Midsummer Eve, for it has been recorded by the usually satisfactory authority about such things, that

If it rain on Midsummer Eve
The nuts will all be spoiled.

The first days of note in the month are the "Ember days," which fall on the first, third, and fourth—Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. These, it is generally believed, were instituted in 219 by Pope Callixtus the First, to implore the blessing of Heaven on the earth by prayer and fasting. The name "Ember" is derived from the custom, once in vogue, of sprinkling the ashes or embers of humiliation on the head on these days. The observance of Ember days was formerly commanded by the Church, and is still carried out in England, both in High and Roman Catholic Churches.

The next festival, still observed more or less all over the world, falls on the fifth—Trinity Sunday. This festival was instituted by Pope Gregory the Fourth, at the beginning of the ninth century, on his accession to the Papal chair, and was first observed in England some four hundred and fifty years later, under the primacy of Thomas à Becket. It is observed in the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches on the Sunday following Whit Sunday, of which it originally formed the octave. Its first observance was enjoined by the Council of Arles, 1260, and the present day was appointed by Pope John the Twenty-first, in 1334.

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, was the first to apply the term "Trinity," as expressive of the three sacred persons in the Godhead. Some idea of the reverence in which the festival was once regarded is found in the number of churches—one-fifth of all—dedicated to the Holy Trinity. In the Roman Catholic Church the day is observed with the greatest solemnity.

Following this great festival comes in

order another moveable feast, "Corpus Christi," which falls on the ninth of June this year. Formerly this day was observed with the greatest pomp and ceremony by the Roman Catholics all over the world. Indeed, it is still kept up in some parts where the Roman Catholic religion is in the ascendant. Corpus Christi Day is the Thursday week after Whit Sunday, and commemorates the doctrine of transubstantiation, alleged by the Catholics to have been propagated by our Lord at the Last Supper. On this day it was usual to commence the morning service with an imposing ceremony, in which the pyx, containing the consecrated bread, was carried both within the church and throughout the adjacent streets by the celebrant priest, over whose head was held a silken canopy. As the pyx approached, everyone fell down prostrate before it. Following this were borne by attendant priests the sacred plate belonging to the church, and, if any were possessed, the sacred relics of saints.

The eleventh of June brings us to St. Barnabas' Day, or, as it was commonly called, "Barnaby Day." Wither says this day is solemnised "in commemoration of Saint Barnabas, a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ; and to honour God for the benefit vouchsafed to the Church by his ministry, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, as St. Luke testifieth, Acts xi. 24." On this day it was customary for the priests and clerks in English churches to wear garlands composed of roses and woodroff. Before the change of style, the following proverb was common:

Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.

In the Abbey churchyard of Glastonbury there used to grow, it is said, a walnut tree, which never budded or sent forth leaves before the feast of Saint Barnabas. In the old style, June the eleventh was the longest day of the year.

Few, who talk of the distressing disease St. Vitus' dance, know that the name was applied through its connection with a saint of the Romish Church, a saint, moreover, without having obtained any position in the Church. According to Butler's "Lives of the Saints," it appears that Vitus, whose feast is kept on the fifteenth of this month, was a Sicilian boy, converted to Christianity through the efforts of his nurse. He fled into Italy, where he fell a martyr some time in the fourth century, under the

sweeping persecution by Diocletian. At Ulm, a chapel to his memory was dedicated, to which women afflicted with nervous and hysteric complaints annually paid pilgrimages. If it rains on St. Vitus's Day, it is nearly as bad as if it rains on that of St. Swithin, and we are told that

If St. Vitus's day be rainy weather,
It will rain for thirty days together.

This same day should ever be remembered by Englishmen, as that on which the great Magna Charta was sealed, unwillingly enough, by King John at Runnymede, 1215. It was many times confirmed by Henry the Third, and his successors. The last King's Charter was granted in 1224, and was assured by Edward the First. The original copy is lost, but a fine one is yet preserved at Lincoln.

Four more days bring us to June the nineteenth, the "Feast of God." This is a feast no longer kept in England, though at one period of our history it was held as one of the highest festivals. People took their offerings to church, and the consecrated Host was carried through the streets, the population kneeling as it passed by. It was on this day that Henry the Eighth, when a child, walked barefoot to the celebrated shrine of Our Ladye of Walsingham, and presented a rich necklace as his offering. In France the custom is still observed under the name of "The Fête Dieu."

It is not a long stretch to the twenty-third and twenty-fourth, which bring us to two of the greatest festivals of the year, that of Midsummer Eve and Day, and St. John's Eve and Day. The Eve of Midsummer Day has ever been regarded as a suitable time for ascertaining who will marry who, and when. But as this has already been dealt with at length in previous articles, we will pass it over now.

The observances of this day in London at one time, were of so imposing a character as to draw an English monarch to London privately to witness all its spirit-stirring pageantry. We learn from a very old author, that men "brought into Loundoun, on Mydsummer Eve, branches of trees, and flowers of the field for the citisiens, therewith to araise ther houses—that they maie make ther houses gaie unto remembrance of Seint Johan Baptiste," of whom it was prophesied "that many shulden joie in his burtha." There are also entries in the Churchwardens' accounts of St. Martin's Outwich, in

1524–5, showing the expenditure of ijd. on one occasion, and iijd. on another, for "byrch and broom at Mydsummer."

An author of the seventeenth century, writing for the special benefit of a young nobleman, warns him against the fearful superstitions of watching on Midsummer Evening, and the first Tuesday in March, to conjure the moon, having his ears stopped with laurel leaves, and to fall asleep not thinking of God, and such like follies, all forged by the infernal Cyclops and Pluto's servants.

Fern seed was formerly gathered with peculiar ceremonies and observances on this day, as we learn from Shakespeare, to enable those who found it to walk invisible at will, and curiously enough, the season was once thought productive of temporary madness; hence Olivia, speaking of Malvolio's seeming frenzy, observes: "Why, this is very midsummer madness."—Twelfth Night, act iii., sc. 4. There is reference to its power to render the possessor invisible in Henry the Fourth, part I., act ii., sc. 1. Gadshill is made to say to the Chamberlain: "She will, she will; justice hath liquored her. We steal as in a castle, cock sure; we have the receipt of fern seed, we walk invisible."

Ben Jonson also tells us,

I had
No medicine, sir, to go invisible,
No fern seed in my pocket.

In "Plaine Percival," a further reference will be found, as follows: "I think the mad slave hath tasted the fern stalk, that he walks so invisible."

This seed was also credited with the power of bringing lovers into the presence of their mistresses, but the gathering of it was considered to be attended with considerable danger. Povey, writing in 1684, says: "Much discourse hath been about gathering fern seed, which is looked upon as a magical herb, on the night of Midsummer Eve, and I remember I was told of one who went to gather it, and the spirits whist' by his ears like bullets, and sometimes struck his hat and other parts of his body; in fine, though he apprehended he had gotten a quantity of it, and secured it in papers and a box beside, when he got home he found all empty. But most probable, this appointing of times and hours is of the Devil's own institution, as well as the fact that having once ensnared people to his rules, he may with more facility oblige them to stricter vassalage."

The juice of the root of the common

bracken, called St. John's tears, is said to be, if squeezed out on Midsummer Eve, an infallible cure for fits in children. Absurd as this quackery is, it still finds votaries in country places where the fern is plentiful. George Wither tells us of yet another mysterious power possessed by the fern, but which has no association with the Eve of Midsummer Day :

There is an herb, some say, whose virtue's such,
It in the pasture only with a touch
Unshoes the new-shod steed.

There was formerly an ancient law, which provided "that no man shall presume from henceforwards to dresse or to make wet any nets for to catch herrings before St. John's Day, at Midsummer, but upon the same day and after that till the last of January included, everyone may freely dresse or make his nets."

Bonfires were lighted, round which the people danced on this night. The doors of houses were ornamented with flowers, and tables were set out in the roadway, covered with eatables provided by the richer inhabitants, and all passers-by were asked to partake in token of amity and good-fellowship. In the City of London there was a procession of armed men, numbering nearly two thousand, called St. John's Watch; and very glorious it must have looked, with cressets blazing, and glittering armour, and swordsmen on horse and afoot; while the open windows resembled opera-boxes on a popular night, displaying ladies richly dressed and glittering with gold and jewellery, who sat to see,

How every senator, in his degree,
Adorned with shining gold and purple weeds,
And stately mounted on rich trapped steeds,
Their guard attending, through the street did ride,
Before their footbands, graced with glittering pride
Of rich gilt arms.

This procession started from St. Paul's, passed down Cheapside to Aldgate, and back by Fenchurch Street to Cheapside, and broke up on the appearance of day-light.

King Henry the Eighth, who delighted in all manner of masques and pageants, came in 1510, disguised in one of his guards' coats, mingling with the rest of the spectators in Cheape, to see the Watch pass by. The result of the spectacle on the monarch's mind may be imagined from the circumstance of Queen Katherine and himself, attended by a Royal train, riding into the City on St. Peter's Eve, when the marching of the guard was repeated. The great ambition of these peaceful guards

seems to have been to outvie each other, not in their martial appearance, but in the bravery of their garlands. Henry the Eighth, though he professed to admire the procession so much, thought fit, in 1539, to discontinue it, and, until 1548, it ceased, and then partly revived, to fall shortly afterwards into final disuse.

A remnant of the custom existed in Nottingham as late as the reign of Charles the First, where a watch was kept, to which every inhabitant of any ability furnished a man; but, though armour, pikes, calivers, and muskets were furnished up for the occasion, so as to make a very warlike show, they softened the appearance of their warrior panoply with wreaths of flowers, for which the gardens of the gentry for six or seven miles round the town were annually put under subsidy. Previous to starting, everyone of the company had to take an oath for the preservation of the peace until sunrise.

This singular custom of patrolling the streets from nightfall to daybreak, originated in the belief that hobgoblins and spirits were abroad, and that witches had more power on this night than on any other; and, as all things evil were said to shun the light, the warding them off by means of fires, and lamps, and glaring cressets, was but another form of the old Druidical one of purifying habitations and individuals from such influences by making circles of fire around them, or walking round them with lighted brands. Out of this superstition sprang the yet more solemn one of watching in the church porch, referred to a little further on.

Formerly, in London, Stowe tells us, every man's door, on the Eve of St. John, was shadowed with green birch, long fennel, St. John's wort, orpine, white lilies, and such like, garnished upon with garlands of beautiful flowers, and also lamps of oil burning all night; and some hung out branches of iron curiously wrought, containing hundreds of lights at once, and bonfires were lit in the streets, to which every man bestowed wood and labour. In the evening the people were accustomed to go into the woods and break down branches of trees, which they brought to their homes in joyous procession, and planted over their doors, amidst great demonstrations of joy, to make good the Scripture prophecy respecting the Baptist, that many should rejoice at his birth. At Magdalen College, Oxford, on St. John's Day, a sermon used to be preached from a stone pulpit, deco-

rated with green boughs, in imitation of the preaching of the Baptist in the wilderness.

The Irish believe that on the Eve of St. John the souls of all persons leave their bodies and wander to the place, on land or sea, where death will overtake the body. In England, it was an article of faith that a person who sat up fasting all night in the church porch, would see the spirits of all persons who were to die during the year, come in their proper order and knock at the church door. On a certain occasion it is told that one of those who watched fell asleep so soundly that he could not be awakened, while his spirit, in the interim, passed his companions and asked admission within the church.

Maximus Tauricensis, who lived about the year 400, is the first who mentions the festival of St. John the Baptist; but from the remotest antiquity, says Mrs. White (1850), Baal fires had blazed on the eve of the day since sacred to the saint, and the practice continued, when its meaning passed away, and is even still retained in certain countries.

With the ancients, according to the learned Gibelin, it originated in a simple "feu de joie," kindled the very moment the year began; and the most ancient year we know of, began in June. It afterwards became a religious ceremony, attended, on the part of the Ammonites and Druids, with even human sacrifice; and just a shade of those terrific usages may be traced in the French regal ceremony—probably as old as the monarchy—called "Le feu de la St. Jean," when a certain number of cats and a fox were annually burnt in the Place de Grève.

"One cannot," says the author just now quoted, in his "Allegories Orientales," "omit to mention those sacred fires kindled about midnight on the very moment of solstice, by the greatest part of the ancient as of the modern nations. The people danced around them, and some leaped over them, and each, on leaving, took away a firebrand, while the remains were scattered to the wind, which, at the same time that it dispersed the ashes, was thought to expel every evil."

In some parts of Ireland the St. John's fires are not lighted until near midnight, the primal hour of their appearing. Every traveller has been struck with the singular and beautiful effect of the observance. The author of the "Survey of the South of Ireland" remarks, in reference to these fires, that the very customs of the Druids are

continued, and that, without knowing it, they annually renew the sacrifice which used to be offered to Apollo, a confirmation of old Scaliger's assertion: "*En Ireland ils sont quasi tous papistes, mais c'est Papauté mêlée de Paganisme, comme partout.*"

For many months previous to the vigil, young men, and boys, and girls are busied gathering materials for the bonfire, and for some reason, which it is difficult to understand, a horse's head is always sought for the centre of the conflagration. The different villages vie with each other in the size and brightness of their fires, and drinking, merriment, and dancing go on around them till towards morning, when each snatches up a brand to carry home as a charm against fairies and evil spirits. With these a cross is smeared on the cottage door, while the charred and charmed ember is placed near the bed, or in the window-sash, where there happens to be one in existence. Nor must the old formula be forgotten of passing through the fire, which is still adhered to. Though those who escape without accident are esteemed the luckiest, yet practical jokes are not wanting on the occasion, and a singed hat or burnt brogue are not deemed too serious misfortunes to laugh at.

In Spain both Moors and Christians keep the vigil, and on the banks of the blue Guadalquivir, maidens go forth in bands to gather flowers in the morning, singing as they go:

Come forth, come forth, my maidens, 'tis the day of good Saint John.
It is the Baptist's morning that breaks the hill upon.

Many harmless divinations were essayed on this day, some of which still live amongst us, and the glass of clear cold water, with the white of a broken egg, changing its form into a gentle prophecy, may sometimes now be seen projected precisely as the clock strikes noon, and set in the sun, whose influence alone can bring about the auguration. The Spanish girls' process was much prettier; they dressed a milk-white wether with flowers full of dew, and danced before it on the hill, when, if the sheep stood still, thus permitting the flowers to retain their moisture, it was regarded as a happy indication, and they returned, sure of the good saint's blessing and the fidelity of their lovers.

Perhaps the most poetical observance was that of the flower cushions which are placed at the outside of the doors at Durham on this day. They were

stools spread with clay, and covered entirely over with the choicest flowers, a custom said to have been derived from the "Compitalia"—the Roman festival of the Lares or household gods, who presided over streets as well as houses—and the idea involved in thus adorning the seat or couch of the Lares, and reposing them on aromatic flowers, was exquisitely pure and beautiful. The Romans made no charge for the lovely allegory suggested, but the shrewd Northumbrians converted the local usage into a source of gain, begging money from passers-by with which to make merry. In this way our ancient festivals have become desecrated, and their poetry lost, have fallen into desuetude or disgrace. One can imagine a trace of the feast of Lares in a usage once kept up at Ripon, where every householder who had removed to a new neighbourhood during the twelve months, spread a table at his door with bread, cheese, and ale, of which all who chose might partake.

Formerly, the Eton boys had a bonfire on the Eve of St. John; but—unless it be in the wild districts of the stronghold of Druidism, Cornwall—no relics of the antique fires of Baal remain in England at the present time. In Spain they are still maintained, and as every man whose name is John has a tar-barrel lit before his door, the towns on this night present the appearance of a general illumination, almost every house in them being privileged to sport a fire in honour of the saint.

The conclusion of the festival in the past is thus summed up by an old writer :

Thus till night they danced have, they through the
fire amain
With striving minds do run, and all their herbs they
cast therein,
And then with words devout and prayers they
solemnly begin,
Desiring God that all their ills may there consumed
be;
Whereby they think through all the year from agues
to be free.

But one more Saint's day remains to be noticed, the festival of St. Peter, held on the twenty-ninth of June. The Romish Church alleges that its founder was Peter the Apostle, and his day is observed with great splendour at Rome. St. Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome under Nero, about 68 A.D. The custom of Popes changing their names upon elevation is said to have been derived from St. Peter, whose name was

changed by our Lord from Simon to Peter—a rock. The words of our Lord, "On this rock will I build my church," are quoted in proof of the assertion that the Apostle Peter was the veritable founder of the Roman Catholic Church. On St. Peter's Eve, it was customary in London to set a watch, similar to that described as being set on St. John's Eve.

Amongst the curious tenures which formerly prevailed, was one by which Sir Philip de Somerville held four manors from the Earls of Lancaster. The Knight had every year, from St. Peter's Day to Holy Rood Day, as a condition of holding his property, to hunt wild swine in the forests of Needwood and Duffield, and dine with the Earl's steward, and kiss the porter upon his departure. There were several other minor conditions, but upon St. Stephen's Day, as soon as dinner was over, Sir Philip kissed his lord and took his leave, receiving nothing and giving nothing for his service.

Though the Saints' days for the month finish with the twenty-ninth, the great holidays are not quite finished. There is still Lady Godiva's Day to be mentioned. This anniversary is purely a local event, and is confined to the good old town of Coventry. Yet, the story of what Lady Godiva did is as familiar as the nursery rhymes of childhood. A great fair was established on the anniversary of her famous ride to perpetuate the lady's memory, and for many years it was one of the chief marts of the kingdom, and was always opened with the "procession of Lady Godiva." As a rule it commenced on the Friday of Trinity week, and the charter was granted by Henry the Third, in the year 1218, at the instigation of Randle, Earl of Chester. It is still held, but at long intervals, and is now entirely devoted to pleasure.

Rudder, in his history of Gloucestershire, relates that in the neighbourhood of St. Brissoel's there was formerly, after divine service on Whit Sunday, distributed pieces of bread and cheese to the congregation at church. To defray the expense of this, every householder in the parish paid a penny to the churchwardens, which was said to be for the liberty of cutting and taking wood in Hudnalls. Tradition affirms that this privilege was obtained of some Earl of Hereford, then lord of the Forest of Dean, at the instance of his lady, upon the same hard terms that Lady Godiva obtained the privileges for the citizens of Coventry. A

similar event is annually celebrated in Sweden on the second of February, only in this case a maiden rode naked through the place to save the population from starvation and the oldest people from violent death.

ELIZA.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"Do cover up that canary, Clara. My head is throbbing with the noise it makes."

"Cover it up yourself, it is your own; though it would be hard to tell why you keep it, a nasty shrieking creature."

Jessie Danver rose in a pet, and flung a wool anti-macassar over the offending songster, and then she flounced back to her chintz-covered armchair, her muslin draperies rustling in her indignation.

The sisters were cross, from a multitude of trifling causes. The day was one of the hottest of the dog days, and their windows caught all the glare from the street—glare which penetrated to every recess of their drawing-room despite the drawn blinds, and showed up all the flimsiness and imperfections of the various little accessories which, in certain lights, were picturesque and graceful. Then Mr. Amherst was coming to dine with them, and this, which in ordinary circumstances would have been a great pleasure to them, was rendered a positive pain by the fact that Aunt Eliza would be there to meet him.

Aunt Eliza was so dreadful; she would be sure to spoil everything; and yet, circumstanced as they were, they could not afford to offend her.

Neither of the girls would have consented to define, even to herself, the vague thing which Aunt Eliza was expected to spoil; but they were quite willing to admit, even to each other, that Mr. Amherst was much the nicest of all their male friends, and that he would be certain to think less of them when he had met their formidable relative.

Aunt Eliza's annual visit to her nieces and their mother in town, was always of a fortnight's duration, neither more nor less, and it was quite a domestic calamity that Mrs. Danver had forgotten that her sister-in-law was in the house, and had asked Mr. Amherst to dinner when he called.

In their own hearts both the girls said that it was "very like mother" to fall

into some inadvertence, but when the invitation was given and accepted, they had the grace not to reproach her; the thing was inevitable, and they must make the best of it.

"If we could only get Aunt Eliza to go away somewhere for the day," Clara suggested, though not very hopefully.

"We could not send her alone, but," hesitating, "why could you not take her somewhere for a good long excursion—say to Brighton, or——?"

"Or to the moon," Clara replied disdainfully. "I wonder what Mr. Amherst would think if he found he was to dine alone with you and mother."

"I don't know that your presence will make such a material difference."

"Of course not; of course it is only your presence that matters to anyone," Clara answered, flushing; more because she felt she had been insulted than because she arrogated to herself any rights in the person in question.

"My presence does not matter either," Jessie said with a little needless bitterness. "I suppose we are old enough and experienced enough now to know that a man can be civil without being impressed. For my part I am sick of interpreting smiles and handshakes."

"Then if we are of no consequence to him, why should we care about his meeting Aunt Eliza?"

"Because we are shams; but we would rather not be detected shams. Mr. Amherst is a gentleman, and he imagines we are ladies, as the women of our family were a generation ago; and then to think of all Aunt Eliza will tell him!" This with a groan.

"Perhaps he won't mind."

"I know he won't mind; but I shall mind, oh, through every nerve of my body. To think of father, an officer; and Uncle Hugh, a barrister; and Uncle Luke a clergyman—all gentlemen; and then Aunt Eliza!"

"But Aunt Eliza could not be a gentleman," Clara answered with some faint consciousness of a humorous possibility in her observation. "And after all, she is the rich one of the lot, and the only one among all our kindred that has ever given us a new bonnet or a five-pound note."

"Yes, I know all that, and I don't mean to offend her, not for twenty Mr. Amhersts; but I would give all the presents she has ever given me if only something would take her home before Tuesday."

"That is not at all likely."

"No, unfortunately."

"And it is quite possible Mr. Amherst may not think her as bad as we do. You know she is handsome, and she always dresses well, and——"

"But she talks; oh, how she does talk! 'My visitors, my accommodation, my table d'hôte.' I think I hear her, and I feel myself tingling all over in anticipation."

"But if we are of no particular interest to Mr. Amherst, why in the world should we care?" Clara asked, without being quite sure whether she meant to soothe or aggravate further.

Now the fact was that, in the most secret recesses of her heart, Jessie was not so sure as she asserted that one of them was not possessed of certain likeable qualities in the eyes of the gentleman in question. But the girl was proud as well as shrewd, and, though she might be quick enough in observation, she was sufficiently sensible to keep her discoveries to herself. To have led anyone to believe, or even to have distinctly told herself, that she had expectations in the case of one likely to look and ride away, would have been unbearable. In confidential moments she might have been ready enough to admit that, like other penniless women, she looked forward to an advantageous marriage as the best settlement in life; nevertheless, no man had ever been able to hold Jessie Danver cheap, or to imagine that she had hailed his advances in any unwomanly way.

That Mr. Amherst, a rich, well-connected, good-looking man of forty, should be interested in Jessie Danver, a handsome, clever, self-reliant girl of five-and-twenty, was a very obvious possibility. Having shown himself attracted by her at their very first interview, and having followed that up by efforts towards better knowledge of her, these culminating in a visit to Mrs. Danver, her mother; it need scarcely be wondered at if, in the most silent chamber of her mind, Jessie admitted to herself that there was possibly "something in it." But of course she scoffed at the supposition when anyone else propounded it; declared that Mr. Amherst had known her father; and that his remembering him and desiring to form acquaintance with his family was kind, and only unusual as far as kindness is always unusual.

It certainly was true that Mr. Amherst had been acquainted with Colonel Danver; but as the Colonel, if then alive, would

have been seventy years of age, whereas Mr. Amherst was only forty, and as the former had left his early home, in the neighbourhood of which the Amhersts were great people, many years before Lionel Amherst was born, it is an unquestionable fact that the intimacy on which Mr. Amherst was fond of dwelling, must have been of a very transient and inconsequent character. But it was certain that Mr. Amherst had known Colonel Danver more or less, remembered him, and was interested in finding out all he could about him and his brothers and sisters; what had become of them all; how many were married, and how many were dead; and where the remaining ones had settled.

Mrs. Danver was openly and frankly charmed with her visitor. Accustomed to be suppressed in the family circle, as not unfrequently happens to neutral-tinted ladies with strong-minded daughters, the poor woman found conversation with a grave-browed, deferential-mannered man absolute bliss. She wore her best silk dress the day he called, and had quite a flush in her cheeks as she told him how well one brother-in-law was doing at the Bar; and spoke of the volume of sermons issued but lately by her other brother-in-law, the Archdeacon; and how her sister-in-law, Emily, had married an Australian squatter, and was rolling in wealth in Melbourne.

"And the youngest one? There was a child by a second marriage, was there not?" the visitor asked, with some show of interest.

Mrs. Danver quailed, and shot a pitiful glance towards the man who looked so handsome, and easy, and mature, as he reclined in one of her faded, plush-covered chairs.

"Oh, yes—Eliza. She was different from the others—had a different mother, you know. Eliza was peculiar; we never could account for half the things she did: she had ways of her own."

"I suppose she is married too."

"No, Eliza never married."

"But she is alive and well?"

"Oh, yes."

"Is she living in England?"

"Yes, but we don't see much of her. The fact is, Mr. Amherst, that she displeased us all by going into business, and after that there was less intimacy between her and her family than there had been before."

Mrs. Danver did not feel herself called

upon to state that at that very moment Eliza Danver was sauntering in the Park with Clara her niece, who had considerably taken her out of the way for the afternoon.

Like most down-trodden women, Mrs. Danver was secretive; her girls were ashamed of their aunt, she knew, and would certainly not wish Mr. Amherst to meet her now that she had fallen so far beneath the position in which they fancied themselves. Interested in her children, and loyal according to her lights, she was determined that nothing from her lips should injure their friendship with a man like Lionel Amherst.

Easily as the visitor had led up to family matters, he led away from the subject just as easily; found a score of pleasant things to say; and, before he went away, had led Mrs. Danver so far to forget herself, that she invited him to come and dine with them the following Tuesday.

Mr. Amherst accepted her invitation with much pleasure, said something amiable about the attraction a family party presented to a wanderer like himself, and bowed himself out.

"Oh mother!—and Aunt Eliza here!" Jessie cried, as soon as the door had closed behind him. "Oh, why did you say Tuesday? If you had only waited till Friday, she would have been away."

Mrs. Danver's face fell. "I forgot about Eliza," she said, and then mother and daughter gazed at each other blankly.

"After all, she is nice-looking," Mrs. Danver ventured feebly.

"Oh, yes, well enough. It is not her looks one minds, but she will talk and tell him everything about herself."

"I wonder if I could manage to get her away before Tuesday," in weak desperation.

"You must not try. Aunt Eliza is kind in her own way, and, after all, her regard is of more value than that of Mr. Amherst." But the words came very despondently, for Jessie felt as though a crushing blow had fallen on some brilliant possibility.

CHAPTER II.

"WE are going to dine late to-day, auntie. Mother has invited a friend to join us."

"Indeed!"

Miss Danver was not particularly interested; but she looked up at her niece with the bright, alert look that was characteristic of her.

She was a tall, well-formed woman of eight-and-thirty or thereabouts, with a handsome, regular-featured, somewhat severe face. Her hair was very dark brown, straight and glossy; her eyes were grey and very penetrating, and her complexion was of that peculiar ivory tint which so successfully resists the ravages of years.

In her rich, well-cut dress; with her handsome face and clear, intelligent eyes; it would certainly have required some explanation, before the uninitiated could have come to understand that this was the relative of whom commonplace little Clara Danver was ashamed.

"Mother is rather anxious about the dinner, and she wants you to suggest a good 'menu' that will not be beyond the scope of our joint efforts."

"Is the friend a man or a woman?"

"It is a gentleman."

"Oh!" a faint flicker of amusement gleamed for a second in Miss Danver's eyes; "then I shall give the dinner my best consideration, and you must let me help Ellen with the preliminaries."

"I suppose you will wear your black velvet dress?"

"I don't know. If this is a very extra sort of gentleman, perhaps you would rather your commonplace old aunt did not appear."

Clara protested vehemently. Of all people in the world, her aunt must be present to meet Mr. Amherst, whom she was sure to like, and who was altogether a splendid kind of a man. But, having found an opening in her aunt's good-humoured observations, Clara prepared to make her little request. This Mr. Amherst, whom they expected to dinner, belonged to a county family, and had never had any relations in trade; and, therefore, as a great favour to the whole of them, would dear Aunt Eliza promise not to mention the hotel before him?

Never in all her life had little Clara seen such a blush as that which surged slowly up over her aunt's throat, and ears, and forehead. It was no rose flush in the cheeks this, but one of those red tides that seem to rise in a hot wave from the very heart.

"You know, for ourselves, we don't mind a bit," Clara went on, with a desperate effort to explain. "We could not admire you more if you were a Queen, and keeping an hotel is a thing any lady might do, I am sure; but Mr. Amherst is different, and he might think it not quite the thing. Some

people have old-fashioned ideas, you know, and always think of the proprietor of an hotel as a buxom person who sees to the airing of the linen and scolds the chambermaids."

"I often scold the chambermaids."

"Oh, yes. But you are different; quite a lady, you know, and looking like a Duchess. No one could ever imagine, to look at you, that you did anything of a practical and every-day kind, and so I want you to let us ignore the hotel for once. The reason is this: Mr. Amherst admires Jessie. I know he does, though she pretends not to think so, and he is quite a gentleman and ever so rich, and we should all like him to marry her."

"But I don't see what he has to do with my occupation."

"Well, you know he might not like it. It is a thing no one should object to really," Clara added with large-minded magnanimity, "but Mr. Amherst might."

"Then, for that very reason, I think he ought to be told before he commits himself."

A slight frown contracted Clara's smooth forehead. Her aunt was certainly a provoking woman.

"I don't think so. It is not like a crime, and it is a thing he should not mind once he has spoken. No one would have the moral courage to admit that he broke off an engagement because the girl's aunt kept an hotel; though a man might find it an obstacle before he declared himself."

"I recognise the distinction." There was a glitter which might have been mirth, or might have been malice, in Miss Danver's eyes as she spoke.

"And you will do as I wish?"

"I think you may rely on me," patting Clara's cheek, "unless I think Jessie too good for him, and so try to alienate him purposely. What is this Mr. Amherst like?"

"Very handsome, tall, and broad, and blue-eyed. But perhaps you know him, for he comes from the neighbourhood of your early home."

"Is his name Lionel, I wonder!"

"Yes! such a nice name, is it not?—Lionel Amherst."

"And you think he is fond of Jessie?"

"Oh, yes, it was quite evident from the first. You know Jessie is rather cold with strangers, but she could not hold him aloof."

"And does she care for him?"

"How can I tell? You know she jests

at everything but the practical side of love. But I don't see how she could fail to like Mr. Amherst, he is so clever, and handsome, and rich."

"All excellent reasons for being loved. Well, I promise not to spoil sport."

"And you will wear your black velvet dress?"

"Certainly, and my opal and diamond ornaments, and in addition I'll decorate the dinner table and make the entrées."

When Clara had gone away, Aunt Eliza fell into a listless attitude, and sat staring blankly at the fading colours in the worn carpet. The girl's half shrewd, half simple words seemed to recall to her memory a vivid dream, long dreamt, and half forgotten.

Was it so long, almost a score of years, since she herself had been a girl, to whom time seemed long and life cruel? Was it really she who had lived through one of those tumultuous crises, whose full bitterness only youth can realise? Was it indeed Eliza Danver who, eighteen years before, had suddenly found herself bereft of parent, and wealth, and love, by one fell disaster? And was it her subsequent vast discoveries of unsuspected meanness in all whom she had previously liked and trusted, which had rendered her practical and self-willed as she was?

She could not answer this, nor could she define clearly to herself the steps of her development.

Eliza had a different mother from that of Colonel Danver and his eight brothers and sisters, as Mrs. Danver had explained to Mr. Amherst, and what had led that mother, when only two-and-twenty years of age, to unite herself to Lanfrey Danver, a more than middle-aged and by no means fascinating widower with nine children, the elder ones already at men's and women's estate, not one gossip in the whole country-side had been able certainly to explain; for Lizzie Lake was something of a beauty, and a good deal of an heiress, judged from a local standpoint, her fortune very nearly approaching five figures, and her education being excellent, according to the time.

Lanfrey Danver was certainly a most respectable man, a landowner, who was regarded as being much nearer the gentry than the farming class, who enjoyed in his household the easy abundance of prosperity, and who had ambitions, social and pecuniary, for himself and his children. But these attributes, however praiseworthy

in themselves, are hardly those which girls appreciate, and Mr. Danver had been nearly old enough to be Lizzie Lake's grandfather at the time she electrified the neighbourhood by marrying him.

That he loved her was very evident to everyone; but the love of the father of a half-grown family is more likely to wear an absurd than an appealing aspect in the eyes of a merry girl. And yet, somehow, Lanfrey Danver distanced men who might have been his sons in wooing the heiress, and carried her off before their very eyes, leaving them to ask each other blankly what it could possibly mean. Had she had a disappointment, and did she fling herself away on this elderly widower through spite, choosing him, of all men, from some inexplicable woman's motive? That love had dictated her action, neither friend nor foe could reasonably believe.

But the bride laughed question and surmise aside, kept her roses and her pretty looks, spent her money freely on Lanfrey Danver's house and children, and never gave surmise or slander even the most slender foundation to build on, till she died when her baby girl was born.

Then Lanfrey Danver wished to die too, but a broken heart does not always kill; indeed, it allowed him to live a maimed life till the young Eliza had reached womanhood.

In a way the brothers and sisters were very fond of Eliza; she was the family baby at first, and the little heiress later, the one who was to have a grand education and the chance of a great future.

It had been rather a spite to some of the sons of the house, at their start in life, that their father would not give them a slice of his second wife's dowry to help them over the dull working days that always precede success; but on this point the old man had been firm, the money was Eliza's; and though they were welcome to a share of the interest, the principal must never be touched.

The money was Eliza's; they had all heard that a hundred times, and yet when Lanfrey Danver died suddenly, intestate, the lawyer-son appeared on the scene, and solemnly took possession of every thing, in the interest of his brothers and sisters.

Eliza should have her tenth, of course; that she should have more was unreasonable; surely law was just. None of them would ask anything but their due; but the sons had expensive families, and the

daughters extravagant husbands, and a thousand pounds apiece would be a welcome windfall to the whole of them.

They were all disposed to be very kind to Eliza; there was not one of them who was not willing to offer her a home till she married—as marry she certainly would, a good-looking girl like her—and further to provide her with all facilities towards that consummation.

The girl listened to what her brother Hugh had to say, as spokesman for the others, and her pale face was very calm, in spite of the tears that had fallen for the dead.

"Give me what comes to me as my share," she said. "As to living with any of you—thank you, no. I have grown accustomed to ways of my own, and am too old to learn those of others easily."

They talked to her about marriage, and not one of them had cared to find out, what any servant about the place could have told them—that she was to marry Lionel Amherst, of Old Court, and that he was to live at Oakdene with her, when she was his wife.

And now Oakdene was not hers, nor her money, nor, perhaps, her lover.

And only a week ago she had not suspected that there was a false heart in the world.

On investigation, Oakdene proved to have been a losing investment for years past. The income from it had by no means covered the outlay, and Lanfrey Danver had been indifferent in the matter of keeping things straight.

"Oakdene belongs by right to Geoffry, the eldest son," Hugh, the lawyer, had stated officially; "but he would like it sold, I know, and the proceeds divided with strict impartiality."

"That is generous of Geoffry," sister Martha cried with fervour.

"Geoffry never believed in primogeniture, I know," sister Louisa said approvingly. "In his eyes the children of one father were quite equal and bound to share alike."

All this time poor brother Geoffry was out in India with his regiment, not uttering a single word of all the fine sentiments attributed to him.

Like most officers without much private income, Major Danver was needy, and so, when the sum of eight hundred pounds was sent to him as his share of his father's property, he accepted it without too close scrutiny. No doubt he did utter a hope

that the little girl was well provided for, but the matter was not sufficiently close to his heart for him to write home and inquire.

Eliza received her eight hundred pounds too, and thanked brother Hugh for all the trouble he had taken in winding up the estate, and hoped he had paid himself for his expenditure of time and money, and he hardly knew if she was sarcastic or not.

Her father dead, Oakdene sold, her kindred so base, and her lover false, what then could more or less money matter to her?

And yet Lionel was not false. If she could have only hated him or anyone, it would have been one living sentiment in the dead sea that surrounded her. He had come to say all that was beautiful and tender after her father's death; he had been present at the funeral, and had met brother Hugh as a friend of the family; only when he learned that there was no will, and that Oakdene was to be sold, and that everything Mr. Danver left was to be divided equally among his ten children, he had allowed his mother to come and tell the girl that all must be over between them.

Mrs. Amherst had not given her verdict cruelly; on the contrary, she had shed so many tears over it that every feature in her amiable face was blurred out of recognition, and she had paused a dozen times in the middle of her observations to say, with a wail in her voice: "How dreadful I must seem to you!" But no amount of sorrow could alter the fact that her fourth son had neither a career nor a shilling of his own in the world, and that therefore, since Eliza had lost her fortune, a marriage with Lionel was absolutely impossible.

Eliza had acquiesced in this decision, and had wondered stupidly why Mrs. Amherst was so sorry. She did not think she was sorry. It was quite natural that things should be as they were. Her father had been old and likely to die, and he had died, and her brothers and sisters accepted what came to them legally, and, since both Lionel and she were poor, of course they had to part. It was all quite natural and reasonable, and exactly what she might have expected; and if she could only have got rid of that horrible weight where her heart used to be, she did not think she would have minded anything very much.

"Don't think I love you less. Oh, I think I love you a hundred times more than ever," Mrs. Amherst faltered, wiping

her disfigured face with the square of wet cambric which she had held in her hand throughout their interview. "You have been as a daughter to me for years, and you must be a daughter still. I promised Lionel before he went away that you would live with me always."

"Then he has gone away?"

"Yes, he went yesterday morning. He said he could not bear to say farewell, and I suppose he thought you would not come to us as long as he was at home."

"Where has he gone?"

"To America; taking with him the hope that, some day, he will have a home to offer you."

Eliza shook her head, not because she knew of the difficulties before him; but because she had no power of hoping left.

"And now, my dear, pack up your things, and say good-bye to your brothers and sisters—ghouls that they are, coming to batten on a grave—and come home with me."

"You are kind to ask me, but it is impossible, dear Mrs. Amherst," the girl answered with her tremulous smile.

"Impossible!" Mrs. Amherst echoed.

"Yes, I must not sit down to think; I must not let myself realise how very miserable I am; I must get as far away from Oakdene, and all connected with it, as the limits of the kingdom will permit."

"And why?"

"To get work, and to learn forgetfulness. I am young, and strong, and poor; and I have a little money and much energy, and I will not let myself be overwhelmed."

So the end of it all was that Eliza Danver took her life into her own hands, found out that she had a talent for domestic management on a large scale, and resolved to utilise it.

"A woman may slave her life out and earn a pittance and be genteel, or she may invest her brain power and capital in the service of the million, and thereby realise prosperity, if she is lucky. But then she will be considered vulgar, and her friends will despise her. In that case, one is fortunate who, like me, has no friends. But if I succeed, I shall make friends. Gold must be the real philosopher's stone," she told herself bitterly, "only that it sometimes works backwards, like a witch's prayer."

After two years spent in self-education in practical matters, the girl invested her inheritance in the purchase of a small establishment, known as the Eagle Hotel, at Stillwater.

The hotel was not of much consequence when Miss Danver bought it; but before ten years it had become the most fashionable hotel in the neighbourhood. She was so thoroughly in earnest, so firmly determined to succeed, having staked so much on her venture, that her own intensity transmitted itself into everything she touched. All her energies went into her work, all her income was spent in advantageous developments; and if she grew at last to speak a little too often of "my hotel" and "my arrangements," and "the accommodation for my visitors," her pride in what she had achieved was considered very pardonable by the friends whom she had made at Stillwater.

Her nieces, however, as we have seen, did not acquiesce in the popular verdict; and though, in tangible ways, they had reason to bless the day on which their mother sent for Aunt Eliza—that she might dispute the bill, preparatory to leaving an establishment which had proved too expensive for her finances—they nevertheless deplored the fact hourly, that their handsome, clever aunt was only an hotel-keeper.

Eliza Danver had been very pleased to discover persons of her kindred in the faded, querulous lady and the pretty, flimsily-dressed girls, whose interest in her was visibly tinged with condescension; and she made overtures of friendship towards them quite warmly, not because she had in anywise forgotten the wrongs endured in her girlhood, but because she had come to think that her injuries were possibly blessings in disguise.

Her busy, business-filled life had forced sentiment quite into the background of her memory; the money she had lost was less by far than the Eagle Hotel would have sold for now; and as to Lionel Amherst, what did it matter about him—a man who had been able to leave her without a written message or a syllable of farewell?

As to her shattered faith in human nature, what did it matter either, since it rested on illusion? It was far better to know that all people were grasping, and self-seeking, and dishonest, because, then, one was prepared to meet them on equal terms.

As regarded her nieces and her sister-in-law, Eliza Danver cherished no delusions whatever. She appraised the amiable, characterless Mrs. Danver, and the shrewder, and possibly more selfish, girls at their exact value; understood perfectly all their

genteel pretences; knew, beyond a doubt, that they never asked her to visit them unless they were quite certain that she would not come in contact with any of their fashionable friends, and laughed at them secretly, and was kind to them in her own large-hearted way.

They had the run of the hotel in the season; they had useful gifts from Aunt Eliza throughout the year; and if, not being perfect, she sometimes took a malicious pleasure in running full tilt against their pretensions with anecdotes of her everyday life, she soothed her conscience by the assurance that pricking the bubbles of their follies was the most salutary service she could render them.

Jessie and Clara did not know that Aunt Eliza talked more about the hotel in an hour in their flimsy drawing-room, where the best articles had been paid for out of her purse, than in a week of ordinary conversation with other people.

THE SCULPTOR'S STORY.

AY, look at it! Graceful, and true, and grand;

Bearing the stamp of genius, as you say.

'Tis pity for the missing arm and hand;

You notice less, looking this other way.

Do I not feel its beauty? To the core;

But then to me it says a something more.

To you, a statue well and nobly wrought,

The chiselled marble breathing patriot life,

The dumb lips speaking the majestic thought,

The proud foot springing eager for the strife;

To me it tells of deeper things than glory.

Have you the time to hear the sculptor's story?

Oh, I will make no weary tale of it,

Nor dwell on the sweet dawn of early hope,

When youth and genius made a temple fit

For fame to dwell in at his widest scope;

It shrank to a poor garret, high and bare,

With cold and famine for companions there.

Not one of all who hailed his promise morn,

With golden auguries of laurelled art,

Climbed to the wretched room, where he, in scorn

Of the time-servers' praises, ate his heart,

And dashed into his work the mock at lies,

That scorches still in those imperial eyes.

Well! Fevered, starving, through the bitter hours,

The strong head kept the gnawing pain at bay;

The gifted hand wrought to its highest powers,

Finished its task, as closed the winter day,

And the fierce cold crept in, to kill and freeze,

As Paris woke to New Year revelries.

Nor bread nor wine upon the vacant board,

Nor faggot left to feed the empty stove;

Below the attic mirth and revel roared,

The steely stars shone pitiless above;

And he had naught to sell, and naught to pawn.

The frost would break the clay before the dawn!

He took the blanket from his squalid bed,

He took the rags that wrapped him as they might;

Round the dumb darling of his heart and head

He drew them, shelters from the cruel night;

And cast himself beside it on the floor,

Giving his all—e'en Love could do no more.

When the reluctant dawning slowly crept,
Through the small, frost-dimmed panes that lit
the room,

Frozen beside his work the sculptor slept;
The strange clothed form stood dusky in the
gloom,

Only one outstretched arm and hand seemed keep-
ing

A guard upon the prostrate figure, sleeping.

Sleeping? A sleep no lingering trump of Fame
Could startle back to life that proved too hard;
No tardy recognition of his name

Could wake the dead, to take the slow reward.
They raised him in a reverence learned too late,
And looked upon his work, and knew it great.

They laid him somewhere up at Pêre-la-Chaise,
And raised, years afterwards, a cenotaph
"To the great master." From their destined place
Do spirits ever look on us and laugh,
A laugh that Heaven may rob of bitterness,
At all the fleeting creeds we men profess?

As for his work, they had it, as you see,
Wrought in Sicilian marble rich and rare;
Only, for all they bore it carefully,

The lifted arm snapped on the narrow stair,
His coat had slipped from it, so frail the rags;
It shattered, frozen, on the frozen flags.

And so it is, as others look to praise
On this, the glory of my gallery, I
Half lose its beauty, seeing, as I gaze,
Its author lying down alone to die.
Such fate is somewhat hard to understand.—
Yes, one does sorely miss the arm and hand.

CHRONICLES OF THE WELSH COUNTIES.

ANGLESEY, CAERNARVON, AND MERIONETH.

It is not easy to understand how Anglesey came by its English name, for, in spite of sundry raids and temporary conquests by the Anglo-Saxons, the island has always remained thoroughly Welsh, as the names of places testify; there being a few exceptions where Northmen may have made piratical settlements on the coast, and where the Anglo-Normans have left traces, as at Beaumaris, with its ruined Norman castle. Among the Welsh the island has always been known as Ynys Fon, or Mon—the Mona of the Roman historians, who have commemorated the conquest of the island by Suetonius Paulinus, when he played such havoc among the Druids.

According to an old Welsh saying, Mon was the mother of Wales, either from its having been the chief granary of the North, or because it was the chief seat of the Bards, and the fountain-head of the learning and religious mysteries of the Cymry. There is nothing, however, particularly fertile or attractive in the Anglesey of the present day. Perhaps the feelings of the ordinary traveller passing to or from Holyhead for the Irish

ferry, are unduly depressed by the anticipation or the effects of that distressing ordeal; but windy, barren, and gloomy is the general impression of the landscape, and cold and dismal are the rocky shores and wild surf beyond. But the shores of the Menai Straits make amends, with their wooded heights, and pleasant glens, and general holiday and festive aspect.

Beaumaris is a fair and pleasant town, with little to recall the days of old except the ruins of the castle—one of those built by Edward the First to secure his hold upon North Wales. Near at hand is a relic of the days of Welsh independence, in Llanfaes Priory, built by Llewellyn, Prince of North Wales—the Welsh do not number their Princes, as is the convenient fashion of other nations, but distinguish them by affixing the names of their fathers, and this is Llewellyn ap Iorwerth, the grandfather of the last and lost Llewellyn, in whom ended the long line of native rulers. The earlier Llewellyn married Joan, the natural daughter of King John by a noble lady of the house of Ferrers, and although scandal connected her name with a Norman Knight, one William de Braose, yet the Prince, having revenged himself upon the lover, was not too hard upon the wife, and when she died, built this priory over her tomb. Hereabouts was fought a great battle between the native Welsh and the Saxons under Egbert, and the skulls and bones which are sometimes washed from the crumbling shore by the tide, are attributed to the warriors and braves who fought and fell so long ago.

Close to the headland of Penmon, and opposite Puffin Island, is a still more ancient priory with more interesting ruins and surroundings. Between the two priories is Castell Leiniog, an old Norman tower which tradition assigns to Hugh the Fat, Earl of Chester. It was in 1096 that Hugh of Shrewsbury and Hugh of Chester associated together, gathered a large force, and entered North Wales. The allied Earls fought their way to Ynys Fon, and slew all they found there. But the career of him of Shrewsbury was ended in a curious adventure. Magnus, the son of Harold, King of Norway, was cruising about the coast in his long ship, and passing within sight of the shore, Hugh rode out against him through the shallow sea, thinking, perhaps, to knock a hole through the ship with his battle-axe. Magnus, standing on the prow of his ship,

drew his bow and sent an arrow so well aimed that it pierced the eye of the chief, elsewhere invulnerable in his helm and shirt of mail, and stretched him dead among the curling waves.

At the present day, with the Menai and Britannia Bridges carrying rail and road over the strait, Beaumaris is out of the track of those who cross from the mainland; but up to the time of the making of the Holyhead road, the chief track for travellers from the English borders was over the Levan Sands at low water, and then by ferry to Beaumaris. Those who came from the South had another route, a terribly rude and mountainous way, a way that had been much better and safer in the days of the Romans, no doubt, than it had ever been since, down to the days of Highway Boards—miserable as are their works—and county police. This road passed through Dinas, Mowddy, and Dolgelly, and then to Barmouth, and along the coast by Harlech towers that rise nobly over the sands of the great Traeth, and so crossing that estuary with some peril, as can be done with little less danger at the present day, and then over a comparatively level region to Caernarvon.

Approaching the town by this once difficult road you cross the brook of Seiont, and you may realise with a thrill the unchangeableness of Nature, and of Welsh names, as compared with the shifting course of human events. For this brook, without doubt, gave its name to the Roman station of Segontium, that stood on the green knoll yonder to the right, by the hamlet of Llanbedig, which has yielded up many relics of its ancient state in the way of coins, and pottery, and calcined stones—traces of the burning and plundering it underwent at the hands of Saxon marauders. The Roman station is, in fact, the fort, or *Caer* in Arvon, from which the town and district derived their name.

A little further on are clustered the blue slate roofs of Caernarvon, above which rise the noble towers of the castle, one of the most magnificent ruins of the feudal stronghold anywhere to be met with. Seven grand towers flank the gloomy crenellated walls, with graceful turrets breaking the massive outline. The grand entrance fronts to the town, and there Edward sits beneath a richly-carved canopy above the guarded portals, his hand upon his sword. Worn and defaced as is the effigy, something about it stamps the figure as that of a mighty lord and great ruler of

men—ruthless and passionless, severe yet just. This figure ever seemed to the generations of Welsh, who watched the towers growing hoary with age, as the type and visible sign of their subjection.

There is little doubt of the substantial truth of the received account of the birth of Edward of Caernarvon within the walls of the castle, although the Eagle Tower, the traditional scene of the event, was not finished till many years after. Queen Eleanor, who in her devotion to her husband never spared herself, was content to pass the hour of her peril within the half-finished walls of the new castle, in order that her husband might present the newly-born Prince—if Prince he were to be—to his reluctant subjects as one born among them, a native Prince of Wales.

But in spite of Edward's mingled force and policy, the Welsh long retained an ardent desire for independence, with a not unnatural antipathy to English taxes, which often drove them to revolt. The first stone of the castle foundations was laid in 1283, and ten years afterwards the Welshmen rose against a subsidy attempted to be levied for the French war, overpowered the slender garrison of the castle, and hung Sir Roger de Puleston, the Receiver of Taxes, over the door of his own mansion. The insurgents demolished the defences of the castle so far as they were able; but after the insurrection had burnt itself out, the castle was speedily put in repair. From that time, the fortress seems to have met with no particular adventures till it was besieged by the French allies of Owen Glendwr, when the town, which was now walled and strongly defended as well as the castle, held out successfully against the enemy.

After that siege, all was peace till the Wars of the Roses, when town and castle repeatedly changed hands—or, perhaps, only sides, for the Welshmen fought alternately for York or Lancaster, according to the varying interests of their chiefs. Then the castle fell into decay. The Welsh were satisfied with a King of their own race—the grandson of Owen Tudor, whom their greybeards remembered well; and castles to keep them in awe were now superfluous. But the castle was furnished up again in the civil wars, and garrisoned for the King; was taken and retaken, and finally surrendered by Lord Byron to the Parliament. The castle was held by a garrison during the Commonwealth, and had its warders and keepers till the middle

of the eighteenth century, being occasionally used as a prison, when it was finally abandoned to decay. But it always has had its Constable, and, being still the property of the Crown, has been repaired, and is now kept up at the public expense.

Belonging to the same chain of fortresses which Edward imposed upon the Welsh, was Harlech Castle, which controlled the passes towards the sea, and which was the site of a formidable stronghold of the ancient Princes of North Wales. The massive towers of Harlech crown a precipitous rock, which overlooks the green marshes below, and the shoals and channels of the wide estuary—the Traeth Mawr—that opens up towards Festiniog, with the Snowdon range in the background, and the blue hills of Caernarvonshire stretching far into the sea. Within, the sternness of the fort gives place to the rich decorations of the Palace—a spacious banqueting hall and rooms of princely dignity. The same richness of state apartments characterises the Castles of Conway and Caernarvon, and Edward probably hoped to see one of his own children a veritable Prince in Wales, holding a Viceregal Court among the mountain chieftains. Conway Castle is even more rich and stately, more of the Palace and less of the fortress than the other two, and with the old walled town about it, and the placid river under its walls, must indeed have been a place to dream about, till the railway burrowed under its towers, and the shriek of trains put to flight the genius loci.

The Romans in their time had driven their highways and founded their military stations in the same general direction. Their base was Chester, also “The City of the Legion,” but they did not cling to the sea-shore like the Plantagenet King, who trusted mainly to his ships for provisioning his castles, in case of general insurrection. Instead of Conway Castle we have the Roman station of Conovium, now Caerhun, some miles higher up the river, whence a military road crossed the wild mountain region to the straits, avoiding the perilous headland of Penmaenmawr. Segontium itself seems to have been a place of some importance, and probably an urban population clung to the site, notwithstanding burnings and plunderings, till with the building of the castle and the fortification of the town itself the municipality was settled, and regulated by the grant of a charter of privileges and immunities, by the King of England.

The Welsh themselves seem never to have cared to dwell in walled towns, or to have had any tendency to come together in urban settlements; and this kingdom of North Wales existed in its earlier state, without any capital town or seat of government. Tradition, indeed, points to flourishing cities buried beneath the waves, to a lost district, that once was the brightest and most flourishing in the country. Such a tradition is common to most races of men, and we may see in this particular legend but another version of the lost Atlantis, which lies beneath the great Western ocean. But the thing may have happened, for all that, and the shallow waters of Cardigan Bay may cover the remains of the “sixteen fortified towns superior to all the towns and cities of Wales excepting only Caerleon upon Usk,” which, according to the Bardic triad, were overwhelmed by the flood in the time of Emrys Wledig. The flood was due to Lythenin the drunkard, who in his drink neglected his charge of the great sea wall; and there is some likelihood about this, for from the earliest records of the bards down to the present day drink has been the great curse of the Welsh, and in a great measure the cause of their national misfortunes. Not, perhaps, that they have drunk more than their neighbours, but that with their high nervous tension the evil effects of intoxication have been more pronounced. “The men who escaped from that inundation,” according to the same triad, “landed in Ardudwy, and the county of Arvon, and the mountains of Eryri, and other places not before inhabited.”

The district of Ardudwy, the refuge of the victims of the flood, comprises a considerable tract of the county of Merioneth, stretching along the coast between Barmouth and the Traeth Mawr. The men of Ardudwy are noted in the Welsh traditions as great men of war, and valiant spearmen. Like the early Romans, they raided among their neighbours for wives—adventures which on one occasion ended badly for the men of Ardudwy. For, being pursued by the outraged inhabitants of the Vale of Clwyd, the ravishers were overtaken and slain, and their graves are to be seen to this day on a hill near Festiniog; while the young women, the cause of the strife, either in grief for their lovers' death, or in shame for their dishonoured condition, drowned themselves in a neighbouring pool. It seems probable that these men of Ardudwy, distinguished for their prowess

above the neighbouring tribes, were among those who made the fiercest resistance to the Roman invasion, and that the Ordovices of the Roman historians were but the Latinised version of this ancient Ardudwy. The district, anyhow, is a rich and beautiful one, and embraces some of the fairest scenery of North Wales; on one side its boundary is that charming estuary of the Mawddach, which between Barmouth and Dolgelly affords a constant succession of the most beautiful pictures of wood, and lake-like river, and mountains clothed in every varied hue. On the other side, the district embraces the sweet Vale of Maentwrog, commonly but erroneously described as the Vale of Festiniog; than which no more lovely, peaceful valley can be anywhere found.

It is the men of Ardudwy, too, who quarry the rich veins of slate which lie about Festiniog; and it is they who made the fortune of Lord Palmerston, who from a poor man in his youth, gradually became rich, people hardly knew how. The great quarry of Ardudwy was the cause of it; that Welsh slate company, of which Lord Palmerston was a chief shareholder, which after many years of perpetual drain upon its proprietors, became eventually a source of almost boundless wealth.

A man of Ardudwy too, it was, who began the work of reclaiming that lost country, where his ancestors may have held dominion over subject cities. That Traeth Mawr already referred to, the estuary which forms the boundary between Merioneth and Caernarvon, was bordered on each side by extensive marshes and sands, overflowed by the tide, an amphibious district, neither land nor water. Projectors had often looked askance at the task of reclaiming this land. Sir Hugh Myddelton, the engineer of the New River, was sounded about undertaking the business a couple of centuries ago and more, but declined, as "grown into years and full of business at the mynes, the river at London and other places;" but significantly remarked, that the undertaking required "a whole man with a large purse." And thus the matter rested till 1807, when Mr. A. Madocks, a whole man doubtless, but of no very large purse, obtained a grant from the Crown of its rights in the drowned lands, and began the work of reclamation. The plan adopted was to carry a great bank of stone right across the river mouth, shutting out the tide, and allowing the river flow to escape by sluice-gates. Sometimes the tide

refused to be shut out, and carried away the works; at others, the river floods burst through with like effect. Mr. Madocks's means were exhausted in the struggle. He raised money in every possible way, mortgaged his patrimony, borrowed money on bond from every one of his neighbours who had a store of coin, however small, and finally succeeded in his work, but at the cost of his own financial ruin. His affairs were thrown into Chancery, and his bonds became worthless. But an adroit speculator bought up his obligations, and eventually obtained the lion's share in the results of this great undertaking. The memory of the man who accomplished the work, is preserved in the names of Portmadoc and Tremadoc, and upwards of eight thousand acres of reclaimed land bear witness to his success.

Better known to the general public, probably, than the men of Ardudwy, are the men of Harlech, on account of the taking Welsh air which is associated with their name. At the present day it may be doubted whether there are any men of Harlech. The writer, visiting the place, found only an old woman there, and she, with a wandering pig or two, seemed to form the whole population of the place. The "March of the Men of Harlech" seems to refer to the exploits of David ap Ieinion, the Governor of the castle, who held it for the House of Lancaster till far into the reign of Edward the Fourth. David, who had fought in the French wars of Henry the Fifth, declared, in the outset, that he held a tower in France till all the old women in Wales heard of it, and now all the old women of France should hear how he defended a castle in Wales.

Eventually David surrendered on honourable terms to Sir Richard Herbert; but the King, incensed at his long and certainly useless resistance, refused to ratify the terms, and ordered David to be executed.

"Very well," said Sir Richard, "then I shall go and put David back again in his castle, and you, sire, may get him out if you can."

Upon this the King thought better of the matter, and David lived long after to whistle his favourite air to the accompaniment of the native harp.

This David is a type of many gallant soldiers of fortune from North Wales, who served in the French wars and the Wars of the Roses. But of all seekers after fortune, none had a more strange, romantic career

than Owen Tudor, of Penmynydd, in Anglesey. At Penmynydd there still stands, or did till recently, the old "plas" of the Tudors, and the church contains a fine alabaster monument, which some years ago was restored by a distinguished descendant of the house, Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

Owen was only the son of the fourth son of the old Knight of Penmynydd, who had served in the wars under the Black Prince. Owen's father had the misfortune to kill a man, an accident then common enough; but the manslayer being in the service of the Bishop of Bangor, more was made of it than usual, and he took refuge in England. In exile, the son Owen was born, and he grew up to be a handsome and engaging young man, "a beautiful person, garnished with manye godlye gyftes." He was no longer very young, however, when he won the favour of the young widowed Queen, the daughter of the House of Valois, who had brought to her late husband no less a dower than the crown royal of France. But the Queen had the warm and impulsive character of her family, and falling in love with her young squire, she married him, to the great scandal and indignation of the Court.

After a married life of nine years—during which she bore three sons—the Queen died, and then Owen's tribulations began. He was clapped into Newgate, and there served a long imprisonment; was hunted here and there; and finally retired into his native country, a pensioner upon the bounty of his sons. He was an old man when the Wars of the Roses began, but he buckled on his armour with the rest, and fought for that House of Lancaster with which his son was by marriage nearly connected; and there could only have been scanty white locks about his head when it was struck off at Hereford, after the Battle of Mortimer's Cross. But his grandson became King of England, as Henry the Seventh; and the direct descendants of the Welsh squireen were the haughtiest, most absolute of monarchs, who ruled England as if they had saddled and bridled her.

Marvellous enough, too, is the history of that other Owen, hight Glendower, whose ancient seat was in Sychnant, in the rich valley of the Dee, the Glyndwfrdwy from which he took his name, not far from the highway between Corwen and Llangollen. A slight swell and depression of the green turf is the only indication of the site of the hospitable seat of this great Welshman

who held the whole power of England at bay.

Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottomed Severn have I sent him
Bootless home, and weather-beaten back.

Owen was crowned Prince of Wales, and held his Parliaments, and made his treaties with France—one given from his palace at Dolgelly. But he died a miserable fugitive, when and where no one exactly knows.

Such were the men of Gwynedd, of that most valiant kingdom of North Wales, which retained longer than any other part of the Principality its manners and usages, its equal laws and ancient tenures. In contact with the wealth and material force of England, the higher and nobler parts of the national life decayed and were lost. Miarule and disorder followed; all kinds of excesses were permitted to the great, and justice was hardly to be had. Perhaps it was an advantage to the country at large, when Henry the Eighth with a stroke of the pen abolished the local jurisdictions, and assimilated the jurisprudence of Wales to that of England. But thenceforth proceedings were conducted in a foreign tongue—for such is English to the majority of the people of North Wales. No doubt, when the change was made, it was contemplated that the Welsh tongue would soon give place to English. But three centuries have not shaken the love of the Welsh for their own native language, and the prophecy of Taliesin is not yet falsified:

Their God they shall praise,
Their tongue they shall keep,
Their land they shall lose
Except wild Wales.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE was not there, as we know very well. Fred Temple had no expectation of finding her, as he went upstairs, though he hoped to hear tidings of her.

If he had not been so preoccupied with his own affairs, at that time approaching an ugly crisis, he might have spared a little more wonder over John—over sober, slow, old-fashioned Cousin John's behaviour. Fred's affairs periodically approached a crisis, which it was always

someone else's privilege to meet and avert. Usually, it was the Doctor down in the country, who did not do it at all gracefully or graciously. He grumbled and rebelled, and made things "beastly unpleasant," according to the delinquent; though he was secretly proud of Fred's bold front, of his fine acquaintances, and of the young-man-about-town airs with which he burst upon the quiet country folk, on his rare visits home.

Fred knew how to trade upon this weak side; but it had to be done diplomatically, cautiously. It was an affair of time, and meanwhile, ten pounds—though it was a mere drop in the bucket of his needs—would stave off the evil moment of confession for a day or so.

It was thus with restored gaiety, and with leisure to spare for an amused wonder at his cousin and benefactor, that he went upstairs. Ridiculous, absurd old boy that he was—mooning, and supposing, and wondering, and entertaining the most wild ideas of that society in which Fred felt himself so much at home.

Mrs. Popham looked little like the benevolent fosterer of poor relations as she came to meet him, dressed in the very last of latest fashions, a small, eager, important little figure; and yet it was a country girl—odd, that John, in his blundering way, should have hit so nearly on the truth—a country girl and a stranger on whose behalf she was thus pressing forward, thin hands outstretched, eyes shining in anxious question.

"Well, what news? Have you found them? Have you seen them? Did you explain to Miss Burton how much I regretted not seeing her? Is she as pretty as you expected? Oh, don't tell me," she exclaimed, as she swiftly read his face, "that you didn't think her pretty?"

"I'm prepared to believe her everything—everything," cried Temple, when he could get in a word; "but, my dear Mrs. Popham, I haven't seen her."

"She refused to see you!"

"She never had the chance," laughed Fred. "It's more flattering to my self-love to believe that she will not refuse."

"What do you mean?" said Mrs. Popham, gazing at him with anxious reproach. "I am not quick—Mr. Popham always said I was not quick: but I can understand, if you would only explain clearly. 'Clearness is everything,' my husband used to say; and I'm sure I don't know, at this moment, whether you have

found the Burtons, or the Burtons have found you, or whether you have neither of you found the other. It's as bad as a conundrum," said the poor lady, sinking into a chair under the weight of her perplexity.

"And yet you have answered it," said Fred, checking his smiles. "We have neither of us found the other, though I didn't know that Mr. Burton and his niece were specially looking for me."

This seemed to be quite a new light to Mrs. Popham.

"Why, they never even heard of you!" she exclaimed.

"Probably not—unfortunately for me; but that makes it a little more difficult for us to meet, you see."

"But you promised to find them!"

"So I will," he reassured her; "but the quickest and easiest method, it seemed to me, was to await the address for which you wrote. I could find them easily enough if I knew where to look."

"Well," said Mrs. Popham, without the faintest ironical intention, "I suppose I could do that, too. And I have written—you know I wrote at once—and the answer has come, it came by this morning's post—by the first post, you know—and Groves brought it up before I was out of bed."

"And what does it say?"

"Well, it says something—not very much, perhaps; in fact, I don't know that it says anything. Here it is; I put it in my pocket when I changed my dress at lunch-time, so that I mightn't lose it. Mr. Popham used to say I lost everything, but I think that wasn't quite fair; I haven't lost this, anyhow; here it is. Well, I declare!" her face fell from its innocent triumph, "if it isn't a bill—a bill for boots, and all this time I thought it was the letter!"

"I don't wonder Popham died," groaned Temple to himself; but he bore this wandering inconclusiveness with outward fortitude, and at last, after various delays, after a running to and fro of maids and footmen, and a search in every possible and impossible corner, the letter was discovered, commented on, and explained.

"The Manse, Lilliesmuir, November 18." The Manse: that's his home, you know. Mr. Spencer is the minister—such a queer old man, and a queer house too."

"He writes an ill-conditioned hand," Fred struck in. "May I glance at the note?"

"Yes, do," she assented readily, "and read it aloud, will you? It took me an hour to make it out, and there may be something I have missed."

"Madam," it ran, "In reply to your letter, I beg to inform you that I have no means of ascertaining the address of my niece, Matilda, as she has—with what I must unwillingly characterise reprehensible carelessness—omitted not only to date the letter received by me from her yesterday, but also to mention her present place of abode, thus depriving me from replying to her communication. If in any future epistle she should amend this error, I will forward the correct particulars to you without delay. I have the honour to remain, dear Madam, your obedient servant,

"JOSIAH SPENCER."

"What do you make of it?" she asked eagerly, when he had finished it.

"I make of it that Cousin Spencer is a pedagogue and a prig, and your Miss Tilly a sadly careless little lady. The date we conceded to your sex long ago—we do not expect dates of you—but to omit both date and address!"

"Perhaps she did it on purpose," said Mrs. Popham with surprising acuteness.

"To escape a homily from Cousin Spencer?" he laughed. "Well, she has escaped us, anyhow." He began quite to identify himself with the quest, and to feel a personal injury in the disappearance of this strange pair. He was piqued, and curious, and the enterprise was the more alluring because of the difficulties that hedged it. It was just the sort of thing to appeal to his imagination, and then it held so many romantic possibilities. Was it not into his hand that the heather spray—emblem of Fortune's favours—had fallen?

As for Mrs. Popham, with every hour of delay, Tilly's charms were enhanced in her memory. She was by this time a miracle of beauty, of sprightliness, of amiability; she had but to be discovered and produced, for all London to fall at her feet. Had she lived her life next door—tripping out and in daily, coming to Mrs. Popham's at homes, her teas, her musicals, her charity sewing parties—that short-sighted lady would probably have been blind to her beauty, unresponsive to her attractions; but a Tilly who had to be sought after, unearthed, wooed, and coaxed! Ah, that was a very different matter! If she had of set purpose willed to make herself of value, she could have chosen no better way to ensure her end.

"And now," said Mrs. Popham, when nothing further could be extracted from the letter, and comment on it was exhausted, "and now, what will you do?"

"I will light my lantern and go in search of a man and a maid. They shall be found somehow, somewhere. How does one begin, I wonder? It's hardly a case for a private detective, and she does not know that we are pining for her."

"She knows nothing about you, of course," retorted his hostess, innocent of wounding intention; "but she knows—she must know—that I am longing to see her. I sent a message to her. I asked her to return—to leave her address. But for you—" she looked at him with vague reproach—"she would have been here now taking tea with us—with me, at any rate. I don't know about you. I should have wanted to keep her all to myself at first, I dare say."

"How cruel of you!" said Fred. "If I find her you will have to include me in the tea-drinkings. I shall be her rescuer, her preserver, and deliverer." He laughed, but he half believed it. "She will be grateful to me; perhaps she will pour out my tea herself——"

"You will have to find her first," said the lady sagely. "I wish you could discover her before Friday."

"Why that particular day?"

"Because of my party. Don't you remember—a dinner! A dinner would be the best to begin with. The Mildmays are coming, and the Cravens, and the Luttrells—a charming little circle for her to start with. They will set the talk going!" she nodded at him. "You will see; everybody will be curious about her. I shall be besieged for introductions. Now I think of it, it would be better for you to find her by Tuesday, or Wednesday at the very latest. Tuesday would be best. I dare say Madame Julia might manage a dress by Tuesday; but not a day, not an hour later."

"And what," said Fred rather cruelly, "what part is the uncle to play? Will the Mildmays and Cravens talk about him with enthusiasm? Will you be besieged for introductions to him?"

Mrs. Popham looked shaken a moment; but with the next breath she rallied.

"He must come too," she said heroically. "He shall take Lady Craven in. She likes eccentric people. You should have seen how much she was charmed with the Professor. She actually came to thank me for the introduction next day. Mr. Burton will be just the thing, it will put her into a

good humour, and you know how important that is if you want a dinner to go off well. Yes, Mr. Burton must certainly come."

"I see that it is absolutely necessary to Lady Craven's happiness that he should be produced," said Fred, getting up with a laugh which covered a yawn, "so I had better go forthwith and find him. And when I come back triumphant——"

"Yes, yes; when you come back with Tilly and her uncle you mean——"

"I shall expect a handsome reward."

"What shall it be?" asked his hostess, ruffling her brows in pleased perplexity. "An introduction to the Professor, perhaps, or," she continued eagerly, "you would like to become a member of the Psychical Society? I know you would. I think I could manage it."

"The Professor! The Psychical Society! 'Ei Bewahre!'" cried Fred, helping out his scorn with a borrowed protest. "No, no; it shall be something more substantial, if you please; something more tangible, more delightful to the eye and ear than your ghost with his language of the knuckles."

"What then?"

"Oh, I'll tell you in good time. The reward must be earned first, and then you shall yourself bestow it."

He carried fervour enough away with him to make immediate action a pleasant necessity. It seemed not impossible that on finding the door of Mrs. Popham's mansion shut upon him, Mr. Burton might have carried his niece to an hotel. Accordingly to the nearest hotel Fred went, comfortably conveyed in a hansom.

He began his expedition with the hopefulness and confidence of an explorer; success beckoning him alluringly, whispering always, "In the next place you shall find them." Each new porter's face had promise writ upon it; but within the pages of the visitors' book disappointment was lurking. Once, indeed, certainty seemed within his grasp.

"Burton? yes," the porter assented. "There was certainly a lady of that name in the house. A Miss Burton—a Miss Burton from the North."

Temple could have shaken the man in his impatience.

"Arrived with a maid two days before."

"And an elderly gentleman?" added the eager Fred. "A Mr. Burton, also from the North?"

"No, there was no Mr. Burton," of that the porter was certain.

"Come," said Fred, adroitly slipping a coin into the other's palm, "you must remember. Short, grey-haired, stout; uncle to the young lady."

"Young lady?" the porter gasped. Never was so stupid, so unintelligent a porter. Suddenly the perplexity of his countenance was lighted by a gleam of relief.

He touched Fred's arm; he whispered in his ear: "There, sir, that is the lady, that is Miss Burton coming downstairs. You can see for yourself if it is the Miss Burton you want."

Temple started forward eagerly, but the next instant his face, too, underwent a transformation: his face fell, his eye lost its brightness.

That Miss Burton, his Miss Burton, that lady of over-ripe years, of step uncertain with age, supported by her maid; of eye gloomy with disappointment; who blinked at him from under drawn brows as she tottered by—that sweet, charming Miss Tilly?

Fred turned and fled precipitately.

"Where next, sir?" asked the driver cheerfully, as the young man came rushing down the steps. The cabby was very willing for his part to continue the chase, but not so Fred. Fred had had enough of it—too much of it. This last stroke of evil fortune had damped his ardour.

This pursuit of man and maid began to look very ironical. How many hotels—large and small, public, private, teetotal, and otherwise—are there in London? How many boarding-houses, lodging-houses, apartments ready to welcome the stranger and take him in? It seemed to Fred that if he visited even a selection of these he would be set up in a profession for life. He might as well abandon the Patent Office and illustrate perpetual motion in his own person.

He saw himself humorously pursuing Tilly through an endless procession of years; wandering from door to door till his legs grew weak, and his back bent, and his sight dim; she, too, growing older with revolving years, till, perhaps, when they met at last, she would be like the Miss Burton he had but seen——

"The gods forbid!" cried Fred, and woke up from his reverie to discover that he was hungry, and that, successful or unsuccessful, a man must dine.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 968. NEW SERIES

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER IV. CONTRASTS.

MEANWHILE Adrian Lyle had gone back to his duties, looking like the mere ghost of his former self. He was not really well enough to undertake service, but he insisted on doing so, and the Rector did not see fit to combat a resolution attended with convenience to himself.

It was a surprise to Adrian Lyle, as he took his usual place, to see the Abbey pew tenanted by Alexis Kenyon and her father. It surprised him, too, to notice the shock that his presence seemed to give them. Evidently he had been expected; but he made no allowance for his changed and haggard looks.

To Alexis Kenyon that sad, worn face, so aged and haggard, was more than a surprise; it was a painful and startling shock. The Rector's droning complaints of his Curate's illness and its many inconveniences had in no way prepared her for so great a change, and for once her heart grew compassionate and almost gentle, as she pictured what he must have endured ere his physical strength could be so reduced.

Much to her father's surprise, she had remained at the Abbey all this time, evincing not the slightest inclination either for travel or society, which had hitherto been second nature. Sir Roy was inclined to put it down to Neale's absence and the danger he was incurring, although Alexis rarely alluded to him, and then only in the coldest and most indifferent manner.

Perhaps nothing that Adrian Lyle could have done would have held her fancy

arrested and almost chagrined as this absence of his. Often she had wondered if it was intentional, or if some hidden motive lurked behind; but the first time her eyes rested on his altered face convinced her that his illness had been infinitely more serious than she had even imagined. When she saw him in his old place, when she heard the deep thrilling tones of that musical voice, her heart seemed to lose all its frozen calm, and a feeling of content and peace stole over her for almost the first time in her life.

She told herself it was only pity that moved her to so swift and sudden an emotion; only pity that made her linger in the church porch after service, in order to speak to him once more. Perhaps, too, it was only pity that made her ask him to the Abbey to luncheon, an invitation, however, which he firmly but gently refused.

"I am not fit for company yet," he said. "I shall just go home and lie down till the evening service. I had no idea I should feel so knocked up."

"You must have been very ill," she said. "It quite shocked me to see how changed you were. I suppose you had some stupid country doctor to attend you and no one to nurse you. I wish you had been sent here."

He coloured faintly.

"I did very well," he said. "And I was carefully looked after, I assure you. The doctor was both kind and skilful. I shall soon be all right again."

Then he turned to Sir Roy. "I hope," he said, "you have good news of your nephew."

"None at all—as yet," announced the Baronet. "He always was a bad correspondent. Things look very serious out there though, and I am getting anxious. I see his regiment is ordered to the front."

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle, gravely. "I saw that, too. I wonder he does not write."

"You would not wonder, if you knew him as well as we do," said Sir Roy, with a glance at his daughter.

She made a movement of impatience. "If you won't be persuaded, Mr. Lyle," she said, "I must bid you good-bye. I hope you will come to the Abbey as soon as you feel stronger."

She said it with a coldness she was far from feeling, for she felt hurt at his refusal. The memory of it haunted her all that afternoon, while she sat under the trees on the lawn with a book which she never read, and felt that her expectation of his presence had been almost a certainty, and had enlivened the long service and the weary sermon.

She did not go to church again, and for the next few days kept away from the village entirely. She told herself she could afford to wait, he would be sure to come to her as all the others had done; but the week went by and Sunday came again, and she had not once seen him.

When she rose that morning, she thought that nothing would induce her to go to the service, but, despite resolution, the carriage was ordered to come round for her. Her father did not accompany her, but as he stood at the hall door to see her off, he called out "bring Mr. Lyle back, if you can. I want to have a talk to him."

This time, Adrian Lyle did not refuse the invitation, which, however, she extended to the Rector also, for reasons best known to herself, and which he accepted with the alacrity of one who likes good cheer, and knows he will get it.

The drive was a somewhat silent one. Adrian Lyle looked certainly better, though he was still far from strong, and infinitely graver and more absorbed than he had been before that sudden and unexplained absence. Yet, despite his silence and gravity, Alexis felt strangely content. It was pleasant to look up and see that calm grave face opposite; pleasant to hear his voice addressing her, to know that for the next two or three hours she could claim his attention exclusively. She let the Rector have his say during the drive, though he bored her dreadfully—there was all the afternoon to look forward to, and she smiled as she thought it would be very possible to make good use of it.

The day was chill and gloomy, the sky grey. Already the leaves were falling

rapidly, and the trees in the avenue had lost much of their summer glory; but within the Abbey itself all was warmth, luxury, beauty.

A wood fire blazed in the great hall and shed its light over the carved oak furniture, the skins and rugs, the pictures and statues, the palms and flowers, the hundred-and-one articles of beauty and art, with which it was embellished.

And when luncheon was over and Sir Roy had dragged the Rector off to the library, and Adrian Lyle found himself established in the most luxurious of chairs before the blazing fire, with the graceful and charming figure of Alexis Kenyon in close proximity, he would have been very ungrateful if he had not acknowledged that the hour and the scene were pleasant.

She was determined that they should be so; and for that end and purpose made herself as gentle and womanly as hitherto she had been cold and repellent. All the infinite charm of mind and manner which she possessed she used now, as means to an end which she had vowed to accomplish. She told herself that merely intellectual curiosity moved her in her endeavour to read Adrian Lyle's nature, as she had read scores of others; but if that were so, the curiosity was subservient to an interest which defied analysis; which invested his looks, tones, gestures, with a meaning no other man's had ever possessed.

They had discussed many things and disagreed on many points before Adrian Lyle found himself calm enough to put to her a question which had troubled him for long. And even then—despite preparation and control—there was a change in his voice which her quick ear at once noticed.

"Can you tell me," he said, "what has become of that Italian servant of your cousin's who was with him when I first made his acquaintance? He has not accompanied him to the war, I suppose?"

"No, of course not," she answered. "But I have no idea where he is. Perhaps my father knows. He had a very high opinion of the man. I cannot say I agreed with it. I always disliked him. I had a feeling he was not honest. Oh, I don't mean to say that he would rob or cheat you; but he was not straightforward in his dealings."

"I thought so also," said Adrian Lyle.

He was looking gravely and thoughtfully into the fire, and her keen eyes noted every change in his face, and wondered

why the mention of this name should be one of interest or disturbance.

"I have often wished to know," she said presently, "where and how you met Neale. His descriptions are always vague. I could never learn anything from him."

"There is not much to learn," said Adrian Lyle. "It was at Venice. We did the usual sights there; wondered at the numbers of churches, still more at the numbers of pictured saints; were rowed about in gondolas; explored the Doge's Palace; were pestered by guides and beggars; admired St. Mark's and did not feed the pigeons; walked up to the top of the Campanile; then went on to Rome, and there parted. You see there was nothing in the least interesting or romantic about our acquaintance."

"Was his sight quite strong—then?" she asked curiously.

"He used to wear glasses sometimes," said Adrian Lyle. Then he looked straight at her. "Why do you wish to know about our meeting?" he asked in turn.

She looked somewhat disturbed by the direct question.

"I did not suspect a mystery," she said with a little laugh, "nor a romance, knowing Neale as I do." But even as she said it she noticed that a sudden flush leaped into Adrian Lyle's pale face, and in her heart she whispered: "There was something—I am sure of it."

"Your cousin," said Adrian Lyle coldly, "is not romantic; at least, so I should say."

"Most men are not romantic, though all, they say, have their romance," she answered, looking keenly and critically now at the flushed and troubled face, whose calm a chance word had disturbed.

He smiled a little bitterly.

"Perhaps," he said; "you ought to know a great deal more on that subject than I do, Miss Kenyon."

"And yet," she said, "clergymen hear strange stories and are the recipients of strange confidences sometimes."

"The stories of breaking hearts and sorrowful lives," he said gravely; "not things to interest you."

"How can you tell?" she asked suddenly, and her eyes flashed with defiant light. "Why should you think me so cold, and hard, and indifferent?"

"Pardon me," he said somewhat startled, "I never said I thought you—that; but you appeared desirous of obtaining the character."

"I think," she said, and her voice grew strangely soft, "I am a mass of contradictions, and no one has ever taken the trouble to make anything out of them. It is my own fault, I know. I have always been proud that I could stand alone; that I was perfectly independent of sympathy, or love, or even friendship."

"You are putting that independence," he said, "in the past. I imagined you were still capable of it, and still proud of the fact."

"You are fond of plain speaking," she said. "Supposing I told you I had begun to feel that necessity for sympathy and affection which underlies all feminine natures, would you believe me?"

"I should not be so rude as to doubt your word, Miss Kenyon, though I might the depth or extent of a new fancy."

"Of course you would only credit me with a 'fancy,'" she said bitterly. "That is your large-hearted Christian charity, Mr. Lyle, which professes to believe the best, and thinks the worst."

"No—you wrong me," he said quickly. "I have not much faith in words which give but new names to new caprices. The soul's zeal manifests itself in the life's work. A few empty phrases cannot alter the selfish indifference of years."

"If you were any other man," she cried with sudden, hot anger, "I would ask you how you dared to speak to me like that? But," and she laughed slightly, "your profession has its privileges, and fault-finding is one. On the whole I am not sure that it is not an agreeable variety to unmixed adulation. I may at least conclude it is sincere, and now—to return to our first subject—have you any special reason for wishing to know where Bari is? If so, I can procure his address from my father."

"Thank you," he said, "I should be glad of it. I have a special reason."

She wondered what it could be, but she did not like to ask, and he did not pursue the subject. He looked pale and fatigued as he leant back in his chair, and she watched him furtively from behind the hand-screen of feathers which she held between herself and the fire.

For some time they were silent. Then the servants brought in lamps and tea, and the dusky old hall looked its best in that mingling of rose-light and shadow.

Adrian Lyle looked round with a little sigh.

"This sort of thing," he said, as he

took a cup of tea from her hand, "spoils one for work-a-day life, Miss Knyon. I am not used to luxury, and I think it is not good for me."

"It would be very good for you at present," she said gravely. "You look wretchedly ill still, and as if you needed care. Have you no mother or sisters to come and look after you?"

"No," he said, "I am quite alone in the world. My parents died before I was six. I was brought up by a bachelor uncle, who educated me and sent me to college. But he died, too, very soon after I had taken Orders. My story is very commonplace, you see, and my life seems destined to be a lonely one."

"I wonder," she said, looking at him thoughtfully, "why you became a clergyman?"

"Do you think I am not suited to the vocation?" he asked, smiling. "I think no other would have suited me so well, though in the first instance I only agreed to it in deference to my uncle's wishes."

"And afterwards?"

"Oh, because of my own. I was glad when duty and inclination ceased to fight. They had rather a hard tussle once."

"I should fancy that you have very strong ideas of duty," she said. "It must be rather troublesome, that perpetual struggle, that constant sacrifice of oneself and one's own desires. And after all it ends in the same way—annihilation and forgetfulness."

"We differ on that point, you know," he said gravely. "If the end were only annihilation, then probably our best plan would be to get all possible good and pleasure out of life at any cost."

"If there is any to be got," she interrupted. "The world seems to me a narrow place with but few resources."

"And you are content to believe in no other; no wider sphere of thought and feeling; a nobler and more perfect existence for the unfettered soul, that here knows no lasting content?"

"If you could convince me," she said, "that individual life is anything but a law of nature, more often regrettable than advantageous; that that life is ruled by aught but implacable laws, which are not to be altered or turned aside; then you might also convince me that something was to be attained by your belief in an after existence, and by constant deeds of virtue and self-sacrifice in this present one. I confess," and she looked gravely at

his pained face, "I should like to be convinced, but no one has yet succeeded in the task."

GOETHE AND CARLYLE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

WHAT a wealth of literature is suggested by these two names! what mines of thought! what depths of philosophy! They are the names of two men whose writings have, probably, had more influence upon the thought of the living generation than those of any other two men of their age.

As men, of course, neither of them was perfect. About Goethe there was almost a magnificent littleness—a transcendentalisation of frivolity—in his legional love affairs. He was self-indulgent and pleasure-loving, in spite of his grandeur of philosophy and height of poetry. Carlyle, again, was a discontented, atrabilious mortal, whose cry was ever, "Oh, man, man!" and whose never-ending queries were "Why?" and "Whither?" Neither of these men had reason to be thankful to his biographer, at any rate; and perhaps the world would have been better if it had known less of the personality of two of its greatest literary heroes.

But let their individual lives rest, for their works follow them. We do not propose here to enter upon either biographical sketch or critical examination, but merely to trace for a little the relations of the two men as these are exhibited in their correspondence, a volume of which, full of deepest interest, has lately been published.*

Those who are familiar with the writings of Carlyle must be also familiar with the intensity of his admiration for the genius of the great German. It influenced his own to a remarkable degree, coloured his opinions, directed his views, and controlled his own literary actions; but it was, probably, Carlyle himself who first directed the attention of literary England in a special manner to much of the work of Goethe, and it was he certainly who gave a marked impetus to the study of German Literature in this country.

Long ago, in the pages of the "Foreign Review," Carlyle discovered in Goethe "what Philosophy can call a Man"—one

* "Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle." Edited by Charles Eliot Norton. London: Macmillan and Co.

"neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devoted, but the best excellence of all these joined in pure union, a clear and universal Man." All good men, he goes on to say, may be called poets in act or in word, and all good poets are so in both; but Goethe was one of such deep endowment and gifted vision, of such experience and sympathy in the ways of all men, that he is gratified to stand forth, not merely as a literary monument, but as "the Teacher and Exemplar of his age."

These and other emphatic laudations of his master were written some time after Carlyle had entered into correspondence with him; but the beginning of the correspondence was the result of the young Scotchman's profound and almost slavish admiration. This was in 1824, when Carlyle was only twenty-nine years old, and when he had just published his translation of "Wilhelm Meister." Thus began the famous correspondence:

"London, 24th June, 1824.

"Permit me, Sir, in soliciting your acceptance of this Translation, to return you my sincere thanks for the profit which, in common with many millions, I have derived from the Original. That you will honour this imperfect copy of your work with a perusal, I do not hope: but the thought that some portion of my existence has been connected with that of the Man whose intellect and mind I most admire, is pleasing to my imagination; nor will I neglect the present opportunity of communing with you even in this slight and transitory manner. Four years ago, when I read your 'Faust' among the mountains of my native Scotland, I could not but fancy I might one day see you, and pour out before you, as before a Father, the woes and wanderings of a heart whose mysteries you seemed so thoroughly to comprehend, and could so beautifully represent. The hope of meeting you is still among my dreams. Many saints have been expunged from my literary calendar since I first knew you; but your name still stands there in characters more bright than ever. That your life may be long, long spared, for the solace and instruction of this and future generations, is the earnest prayer of, Sir, your most devoted servant,

"THOMAS CARLYLE."

This is what one may call a pretty letter, and one so unlike what we have been accustomed to think of "Thomas of Chelsea,"

that it is almost a literary curiosity. To see Carlyle going down on his knees to any man is a marvel; but we see it again and again throughout these letters, the prevailing note of which is almost abject prostration before his idol. But we must now give the receipt of what was the proudest and greatest delight of the struggling Scotchman's life at that time—the first letter from the great Goethe. It is dated Weimar, the thirtieth of October, 1824, and, of course, was in German:

"If I did not, my dear Sir, promptly inform you of the safe arrival of your welcome present, the reason was that I had not the intention of writing a mere acknowledgement, but of adding thereto some deliberate words concerning your work which does me such honour. My advanced years, continually burdened with many indispensable duties, have, however, prevented me from leisurely comparing your translation with the original; which might, perhaps, prove a harder task for me than for some third person thoroughly at home in German and English Literature. But now, since I have an opportunity of sending the present letter safely to London, by favour of the Lords Bentinck, and at the same time of bringing about an acquaintance agreeable to both parties, I do not delay to express my sincere thanks for your hearty sympathy in my literary work, as well as in the incidents of my life, and to beg earnestly for a continuance of it in the future. Perhaps I shall hereafter come to know much of you. Meanwhile I send, together with this, a set of poems, which you can hardly have seen, but which I venture to hope may prove of some interest to you.

"With the sincerest good wishes,

"Most truly yours,

"J. W. v. GOETHE."

It seems odd, nowadays, to think of anyone having to wait the opportunity of a chance traveller for the transmission of a letter from Germany to England; but then we are dealing with sixty-three years ago, before a "Postal Union" was even dreamed of. The receipt of this "Message from Fairyland," was at once rapturously communicated by Carlyle to Miss Welsh, his future wife, in a perfect ecstasy of delight over the "kind nothings, in a simple, patriarchal style, extremely to my taste." But it was not until more than two years had elapsed that he again ventured to address the mighty one, thanking him for the letter and present. In April, 1827, he writes:

"To me they are memorials of one

whom I never saw, yet whose voice came to me from afar, with counsel and help in my utmost need. For, if I have been delivered from darkness into any measure of light; if I know aught of myself, and my duties, and destination; it is to the study of your writings more than to any other circumstance, that I owe this: it is you more than any other man that I should always thank and reverence with the feeling of a Disciple to his Master, nay, of a son to his spiritual Father. This is no idle compliment, but a heartfelt truth; and humble as it is, I feel that the knowledge of such truths must be more pleasing to you than all other glory."

Then he goes on to speak of his "Life of Schiller," and "German Romance," copies of which he sends to Goethe, and of the success of some of Goethe's later publications, which leads up to this:

"All this warrants me to believe that your name and doctrines will, ere long, be English as well as German; and certainly there are few things which I think I have more satisfaction in contemplating than the fact that to this result my own efforts have contributed; that I have assisted in conquering for you a new province of mental empire; and for my countrymen a new treasure of wisdom which I myself have found so precious. One day it may be, if there is any gift in me, I shall send you some work of my own; and, along with it, you will deserve far deeper thanks than those of Hilaria to her friendly artist."

The last allusion is to two characters in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." After this the letter goes on to an interesting personal matter:

"About six months ago I was married; my young wife, who sympathises with me in most things, agrees also in my admiration of you, and would have me, in her name, beg of you to accept this purse, the work, as I can testify, of dainty fingers and true love; that so something, which she had handled and which had been hers, might be in your hands and be yours. In this little point I have engaged that you will gratify her. She knows you in your own language, and her first criticism was the following, expressed with some surprise: 'This Goethe is a greater genius than Schiller, though he does not make me cry!'—a better judgement than many which have been pronounced with more formality."

In due time—that is, in about a month or so—comes a hasty note from Goethe,

acknowledging the presents, and sending "most sincere thanks to the dear husband and wife," and intimating that a packet was being despatched to them in return. This letter was addressed to "Sir" Thomas Carlyle. It is followed, two months later, by a more lengthy epistle from Goethe, from which we extract the following:

"Let me, first of all, my dear Sir, commend most highly your biography of Schiller. It is remarkable for the close study it shows of the incidents of his life, whilst it also manifests a sympathetic study of his works. The accurate insight into the character and distinguished merit of this man, which you have thus acquired, is really admirable, and so clear and just as was hardly to have been expected from a foreigner. In this an old saying is verified: 'Love helps to perfect knowledge.' For precisely because the Scotchman regards the German with kindness, and honours and loves him, does he recognise most surely his admirable qualities; and thus he rises to a clearness of view, to which even the great man's compatriots could not in earlier days attain. For their contemporaries very easily fall into error concerning eminent men: personal peculiarities disturb them; the changeful current of life displaces their points of view, and hinders their knowledge and recognition of such men. Schiller, however, was of so exceptional a nature, that his biographer had but to keep before his eyes the ideal of a pre-eminent man, and by maintaining it to the end, through individual fortunes and actions, see his task fulfilled. The notices of the lives of Müllers, Hoffmann, and Richter, prefixed to the 'German Romance' are also in their kind to be commended. They are compiled with care, set forth concisely, and give sufficient information concerning the individual character of each author, and of its effect upon his writings."

This criticism must have been as honey in the mouth to Carlyle, and it cemented the limited Mutual Laudation Society which the two now established. But this same letter of Goethe's is remarkable further for what it goes on to say about German Literature:

"Whoever understands and studies German, finds himself in the market where all nations offer their wares; he plays the interpreter, while he enriches himself. And thus every translator is to be regarded as a middle-man in this universal spiritual commerce, and as mak-

ing it his business to promote this exchange; for say what we may of the insufficiency of translation, yet the work is and will always be one of the weightiest and worthiest affairs in the general concerns of the world. The Koran says: 'God has given to each people a prophet in its own tongue!' Thus each translator is a prophet to his people. Luther's translation of the Bible has produced the greatest results, though criticism gives it qualified praise, and picks faults in it, even to the present day. What, indeed, is the whole enormous business of the Bible Society, but to make known the Gospel to all people in their own tongue?"

Then a fatherly word of advice is addressed to Carlyle to ponder over the meaning of what has been said, and warm thanks are tendered for the pains he has "expended on my works."

Shortly after this Carlyle writes in high delight to his mother:

"News came directly after breakfast that the packet from Goethe had arrived in Leith! Without delay I proceeded thither; found a little box carefully overlapped in wax-cloth, and directed to me. After infinite wranglings, and perplexed misdirected higgings, I succeeded in rescuing the precious packet from the fangs of the Custom-house sharks, and in the afternoon it was safely deposited in our own little parlour. The daintiest boxie you ever saw! so carefully packed, so neatly and tastefully contrived in everything. There was a copy of Goethe's poems in five beautiful little volumes 'for the valued marriage-pair Carlyle'; two other little books for myself; then two medals, one of Goethe himself, and another of his father and mother; and, lastly, the prettiest wrought-iron necklace with a little figure of the poet's face set in gold, 'for my dear spouse,' and a most dashing pocket-book for me. In the box containing the necklace, and in each pocket of the pocket-book were cards, each with a verse of poetry on it in the old master's own hand: all these I will translate to you by-and-by, as well as the long letter which lay at the bottom of all, one of the kindest and gravest epistles I ever read."

The "infinite wranglings and perplexed misdirected higgings" is deliciously characteristic of wrathful Thomas, who, however, duly attunes his mind and adjusts his pen for the following reply:

"If the best return for such gifts is

the delight they are enjoyed with, I may say that you are not unrepaid; for no royal present could have gratified us more. These books, with their Inscriptions, the Autographs and tasteful Ornaments, will be precious in other generation than ours. Of the Necklace in particular, I am bound to mention that it is repositied among the most precious jewels, and set apart 'for great occasions' as an earnest Zierde, fit only to be worn before Poets and intellectual men. Accept our heartiest thanks for such friendly memorials of a relation which, faint as it is, we must always regard as the most estimable of our life. This little drawing-room may now be said to be full of you. My translations from your Works already stood, in fair binding, in the Bookcase, and portraits of you lay in portfolios. During our late absence in the country some good genius, to prepare a happy surprise for us, had hung up, in the best framing and light, a larger picture of you, which we understand to be the best resemblance; and now your Medals lie on the mantelpiece; your Books, in their silk-paper covers, have displaced even Tasso's 'Gerusalemme'; and from more secret recesses your handwriting can be exhibited to favoured friends. It is thus that good men may raise for themselves a little sanctuary in houses and hearts that lie far away. The tolerance, the kindness with which you treat my labours in German Literature must not mislead me into vanity, but encourage me to new efforts in appropriating what is Beautiful and True, wheresoever and howsoever it is to be found. If 'love' does indeed 'help to perfect knowledge,' I may hope in time coming to gain better insight both into Schiller and his Friend; for the love of such men lies deep in the heart and wedded to all that is worthy there."

Then, after a few remarks about Helena and Faust, he goes on:

"You are kind enough to inquire about my bygone life. With what readiness could I speak to you of it! how often have I longed to pour out the whole history before you! As it is, your Works have been a mirror to me unasked and unhelped for; your wisdom has counselled me; and so peace and health of Soul have visited me from afar. For I was once an Unbeliever, not in Religion only, but in all the Mercy and Beauty of which it is the Symbol; storm-tossed in my own imaginations, a man divided from men; exasperated, wretched, driven almost to despair;

so that Faust's wild curse seemed the only fit greeting for human life; and his passionate 'Fluch vor allen der Geduld!' was spoken from my very inmost heart. But now, thank Heaven, all this is altered; without change of external circumstances, solely by the new light which rose upon me, I attained to new thoughts, and a composure which I should once have considered as impossible. And now, under happier omens, though the bodily health which I lost in these struggles has never been and may never be restored to me, I look forward with cheerfulness to a life spent in Literature, with such fortune and such strength as may be granted me; hoping little and fearing little from the world; having learned that what I once called happiness is not only not to be attained on Earth, but not even to be desired. No wonder I should love the wise and worthy men by whose instructions so blessed a result has been brought about. For these men, too, there can be no reward like that consciousness that, in distant countries and times, the hearts of their fellow-men will yearn towards them with gratitude and veneration, and those that are wandering in darkness turn towards them as to loadstars guiding into a secure home. I shall still hope to hear from you, and again to write to you, and always acknowledge you as my Teacher and Benefactor. May all good be long continued to you for your own sake and that of Mankind."

Then a postscript is appended in Mrs. Carlyle's hand:

"My heartfelt thanks to the Poet for his graceful gift, which I prize more than a necklace of diamonds, and kiss with truest regard,

"J. W. CARLYLE"

We have given this interesting letter almost in full, because it is so eminently characteristic of Carlyle, and shows so much of his deep, inner feelings.

Some five months elapsed before Goethe responded; but in January, 1828, he wrote announcing the despatch of another package to the Carlyles, containing several volumes of the new edition of his works, six more medals—one of which is to be presented to Sir Walter Scott, "with my best regards," and the others to be distributed among "my well-wishers"—and some more little presents. Appended to the latter are cards bearing verses by Goethe, of which the following are rather lame translations:

ON A BREASTPIN.

When thy friend, in guise of Moor,
Greets thee now from background bright,
I envy him the happy hour
That brings him gladness in thy sight.

TO THE LOYAL AND LOVING PAIR, AT EDINBURGH.

(For the New Year, 1828.)

When Phœbus' steeds too quickly take
To dark and cloud their flight,
The lamp of love will scarcely make
Full short the longest night.
And when again towards the light
The Hours shall swiftly throng,
So will a face, full kind and bright,
The longest day prolong.

In the box there was a continuation of the letter, containing literary remarks and some account of the state of society in Weimar at the time. As to this last, Thackeray, who was there, wrote to G. H. Lewes, in 1855:

"Five-and-twenty years ago, at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, or sport, or society; all of which were to be had in the friendly little Saxon capital. The Grand Duke and Duchess received us with the kindest hospitality. The Court was splendid, but yet most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turns to dinners, balls, and assemblies there. Such young men as had a right appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing, the kind old Hof-Marschall of those days, M. de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on), being in no wise difficult as to the admission of these young Englishers. On the winter nights we used to charter sedan-chairs, in which we were carried through the snow to those pleasant Court entertainments. I, for my part, had the good luck to purchase Schiller's sword, which formed a part of my Court costume, and still hangs in my study, and puts me in mind of days of youth, the most kindly and delightful. We knew the whole society of the little city, and but that the young ladies, one and all, spoke admirable English, we surely might have learned the very best German. The society met constantly. The ladies of the Court had their evenings. The theatre was open twice or thrice in the week, where we assembled, a large family party. . . . In 1831, though he had retired from the world, Goethe would, nevertheless, kindly receive strangers. His daughter-in-law's tea-table was always spread for us. We passed hours after hours there, and night after night, with the

pleasantest talk and music. We read over endless novels and poems in French, English, and German. My delight in those days was to make caricatures for children. I was touched to find that they were remembered, and some even kept until the present time; and very proud to be told, as a lad, that the great Goethe had looked at some of them. He remained in his private apartments, where only a very few privileged persons were admitted; but he liked to know all that was happening, and interested himself about all strangers. . . . Of course I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long-expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little antechamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab redingote, with a white neckcloth, and a red ribbon in his button-hole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear, and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark, piercing, and brilliant: I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called 'Melmoth, the Wanderer,' which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich and sweet. He asked me questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent."

This view of Weimar and Goethe is necessary to introduce here, because Carlyle, although always intending, never saw either; at any rate he was never in Weimar while Goethe lived.

THE KING'S EVIL.

ALTHOUGH it has been written that the action of the English regicides struck a "damp-like death through the heart of flunkieism in this world," Royalty was nevertheless, long subsequent to Charles' days, held not merely in honour, but regarded with many superstitious feelings.

As well from the sanctity ascribed to his office, as from the reverence in which his descent was held, the Sovereign was deemed the possessor of powers all but supernatural; and it is not surprising that a reference to the belief in the supposed gift of healing by the mere touch of the Royal hand found its way into the greatest of Shakespeare's plays:

Mal. Comes the King forth, I pray you?
Doct. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure; . . . at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given in his hand,
They presently amend.
Mac. What's the disease he means?
Mal. 'Tis called the Evil;
. . . strangely visited people,
All swol'n and pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
. . . and 'tis spoken
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.
"Macbeth," Act iv., Scene 3.

It has, indeed, been asserted that this reference to a monarch's miraculous powers was designed to gratify the inordinate vanity of James the First; the fact, however, remains that a belief that scrofula could be healed by Royal touch existed from very early times both in this country and also in France. The English Kings were supposed to have inherited the power from the Confessor, and the French from St. Louis; and the supernatural virtue which our monarchs were said to possess, was ascribed in the days of Malmesbury, who lived about a hundred years later than St. Edward, to the hereditary right of the Royal line. No mention occurs of any of the first four English Kings of Norman race having attempted to cure the complaint; though Peter of Blois, who was his chaplain, bears testimony to the fact that Henry the Second both touched and healed those who were thus afflicted.

Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the time of Henry the Fourth, represents the power of healing as having been possessed by the Kings of England from time immemorial; but it was not until the reign of Henry the Seventh, who introduced the practice of presenting a small piece of gold to the sufferer, that a special Latin service was drawn up for the occasion. Nor has the exercise of this power been claimed for Kings alone; for, though it was at one time imagined that Queens, not being anointed in the hands, were incapable of exerting it, numerous cases of cure by Elizabeth are recorded, and the healing virtue was found in no degree impaired even subsequent to the

thunders of Papal excommunication. Her Majesty, however, is said to have been so tired of touching those who were desirous of being cured of the Evil, that, during one of her progresses in Gloucestershire, she warned the crowds who were pressing about her that God alone could relieve them of their complaints.

By proclamation, dated March the twenty-fifth, 1616, it appears that the King, through fear of contagion, would not permit patients to approach him during the summer months; and it was announced that no application would be received from anyone who did not bring a certificate, signed by the Vicar and Churchwardens of the parish, to the effect that he had never been previously touched. The necessity for this regulation arose, no doubt, from the greed of supposed patients who had attempted to receive the piece of gold on more than one occasion.

In the time of Charles the First the appointed service, though still printed upon a separate sheet, was drawn up in English, and, in the violent conflicts of parties during his reign, the reputed miracle assumed an additional importance. One cure, worked by this King, is especially famous: An innkeeper of Winchester, who was grievously ill and had sought help from many physicians, threw himself in the monarch's way as he was being conveyed through the city on his way to his place of confinement in the Isle of Wight. Being prevented by the guards from drawing near enough to the King to touch him, he fell on his knees beseeching help, and loudly crying, "God save the King."

"Friend," said Charles, "I see thou art not permitted to come near me, and I cannot tell what thou wouldest have; but may God bless thee and grant thy desire."

The Warden of Winchester College, Dr. Nicholas, assures us that this prayer was heard; that the sick man was healed of his disease; and that, within his own knowledge, these facts are essentially true.

Aubrey relates how, when Charles was a prisoner at Carisbrooke Castle, a woman, who had the King's Evil in her eye, and had not seen for a fortnight previous, was touched by him. "As they were at prayers," he adds, "after the touching, the woman's eyes opened."

Dr. Heylin asserts that he had seen children brought in the arms of their nurses before Charles the First, and that they were all cured "without the help of a serviceable imagination."

The King, at any rate, "had not always gold to bestow; for which reason he sometimes substituted silver, and not unfrequently touched without giving alms at all.

Prior to the era of Charles the Second, no special coins appear to have been given at the ceremony; after this date, however, touch-pieces—bearing on the margin the words "He touched them," and on the reverse side "And they were healed," and displaying figures, commonly St. Michael and the Dragon on one side and a ship on the other—were coined.

These touch-pieces were at one time bored, so that they could be worn round the neck by a ribbon until the cure was completed; and thus in *The Rehearsal*, when Prince Prettyman talks of going to the wars, we find Tom Thimble observing: "I shall see you come home like an angel for the King's Evil, with a hole bored through you."

Charles the Second is said to have retained the power even in exile, and to have touched for scrofula in Holland, Flanders, and even in France. After the Restoration, the number of cases seems to have greatly increased, as many as six hundred at a time having been brought before the King; and one of the Royal surgeons, named Browne, whose duty it was to inspect the sick and verify the cures, assures us that in one single year Charles performed the ceremony eight thousand five hundred times, and in the course of his reign laid his hands upon no fewer than one hundred thousand persons. In the year 1687, on one single Sunday at Oxford, the King touched several hundred sick, and a petition is still preserved in the records of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, asking assistance from the assembly of the province to enable one of the inhabitants to proceed to England, to participate in the healing virtues of the miraculous gift.

The following announcement appears in the columns of the "Public Intelligencer," May the fourteenth, 1664. "His Sacred Majesty having declared it to be his royal will and purpose to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the month of May, and then to give over till Michaelmas next, I am commanded to give notice thereof, that the people may not come up to town in the interim and lose their labour." The famous Admiralty secretary, Samuel Pepys, records in his "Diary," June, 1660, that "he staid to see the King

touch the people for King's Evil. But he did not come at all, it rayned so; and the poor people were forced to stand all the morning in the rain in the garden, and afterwards he touched them in the Banqueting-house." And again, thirteenth of April of the following year, he records that he went "to the Banquet-house, and there saw the King heale, the first time that ever I saw him do it; which he did with great gravity, and it seemed to me an ugly office and a simple one."

In the "London Gazette," January, 1683-4, is advertised "A Treatise on King's Evil, with a description of the Royal gift of healing it by imposition of hands, as performed for above six hundred and forty years by the Kings of England," by one of H.M.'s Surgeons-in-Ordinary, to which volume was prefixed a picturesque view of the Sovereign performing the ceremony; from this publication it appears that between May, 1660, and April, 1682, no fewer than ninety-two thousand persons had been touched by the King.

Evelyn in his "Diary," 6th July, 1660, says: "His Majesty began first to touch for the Evil according to custom, thus: His Majesty sitting under his State in the Banqueting-house, the chirurgeons cause the sick to be brought or led up to the throne, where, they kneeling, the King strokes their faces or cheeks with both hands at once, at which instant a chaplaine in his formalities says: 'He put his hands upon them and he healed them.' This is sayd to everyone in particular. When they have been all touched, they come up again in the same order, and the other chaplaine kneeling, and having angel gold strung on white ribbon on his arms, delivers them, one by one, to His Majesty, who puts them about the necks of the touched as they passe, while the first chaplaine repeats, 'That is the true Light who came into the world.' Then follows an Epistle—as at first a Gospel—with the Liturgy; prayers for the sick with some alterations; and, lastly, the blessing; and the Lord Chamberlain and Comptroller of the Household bring a basin, ewer, and towel, for His Majesty to wash." And under date 28th March, 1684, he informs us "that there were so great a concourse of people with their children to be touch'd for the Evil, that six or seven were crush'd to death by pressing at the Chirurgeon's door for tickets."

The French monarchs employed a less presumptuous form of words, and when

laying hands upon the sufferer, said merely, "Le roi te touche; Dieu te guérisset." Cavendish, in his "Life of Wolsey," describes Francis the First as rubbing with his bare hands and blessing about two hundred persons diseased with the King's Evil, to whom money was afterwards distributed by the Almoner; "after which done, the King washed his hands and came to dinner, when my Lord Cardinal dined with him." Gemelli states that on the Easter Day, 1686, Louis the Fourteenth touched one thousand six hundred persons, every Frenchman receiving fifteen sous, and every foreigner thirty; and Louis the Sixteenth, immediately after his coronation at Rheims, 1775, went to the Abbey of St. Remi and made the sign of the Cross upon the faces of two thousand four hundred people who suffered under this affliction.

The "London Gazette," October, 1686, announces that His Majesty is graciously pleased to heal weekly for the Evil, upon Fridays, and the physicians and surgeons were to attend at an office appointed for the purpose in the Mews on Thursday afternoons to give tickets; of which parish ministers were required to give notice, and to be careful to register certificates granted by them in a book to be kept for the purpose. In Bishop Cartwright's "Diary," under date August 27th, 1687, we read:

"I was at His Majesty's levee; from whence, at nine o'clock, I attended him into the closet, where he healed three hundred and fifty persons."

It was one of the proofs against the Duke of Monmouth, that he had touched for the Evil when in the West.

The exercise of these thaumaturgic gifts, however, was suspended by the Revolution, for Dutch William was not generally believed to possess the power of healing. "William," says Macaulay, "had too much sense to be duped, and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture." "It is a silly superstition," he exclaimed, when he heard that at the close of Lent, his Palace was besieged by a crowd of sick. "Give the poor creatures some money and send them away." On one single occasion was he importuned into laying his hand upon a patient, "God give you better health," he said, "and more sense."

The revival of the belief in these supernatural powers when the old dynasty was once more seated upon the throne, is one of the most curious features of ecclesiastical enthusiasm in the reign of Queen Anne.

Under a Stuart Queen, the Royal miracle was resuscitated, and the religious service, heretofore separate, was now inserted in the "Book of Common Prayer;" nor was it until some time after the accession of George the First, that the University of Oxford ceased to reprint the "Office of the Healing," together with the Liturgy. Proclamations appointed to be read in all parish churches were issued, announcing that the Queen would exercise the power as of yore, and the Sergeant-Surgeon to Her Majesty, who examined [the patients, has asserted in strong terms his belief in the reality of many of the cures. Swift, in his *Journal to Stella*, mentions—28th April, 1711—having made application through the Duchess of Ormond in behalf of a sick boy, and on a single day in the year following, two hundred persons appeared before Her Majesty, among them, no less a personage than Samuel Johnson, whose mother, acting under the advice of Sir John Floyer, then a physician at Lichfield, carried him to London, where he was actually touched by the Queen. Mrs. Piozzi describes his recollections of this scene: "He possessed," he said, "a confused, though somewhat solemn remembrance of a lady in diamonds, wearing a long black hood." He was but two-and-a-half years old at the time; and Boswell, alluding to the well-known Jacobite principles of the Lexicographer, ventured one day, to remark to him that "his mother did not carry him far enough; she brought him from Lichfield to London, but she should have taken him to Rome," i.e. to the Pretender. The touch-piece given by Queen Anne to Dr. Johnson is still preserved in the British Museum.

It appears to have been to the rite of unction, used in the coronation of our Kings, that this gift of healing was very generally ascribed. But Carte, whom Warton called "the historian for facts," declares that he himself had seen a very remarkable instance of such a cure, which cannot possibly be ascribed to such cause, in the case of a native of Somersetshire, who, a sufferer for many years from King's Evil, was taken in 1716 to Paris, touched, and as he would have us believe, in consequence healed, by the eldest lineal descendant of a race of Kings "who had indeed, for a long succession of ages, cured that distemper by the Royal touch, but who had not been either crowned or anointed." These remarks, implying that the extraordinary gift was confined to the Stuart dynasty and denied to the monarchy

of the house of Hanover, had an injurious effect upon the historian; the Corporation of London withdrew their subscription and patronage, his credit was destroyed, and his work, in consequence, was left incomplete.

Mr. Barrington has preserved an anecdote which he had heard from an old man (who was a witness in a case), with reference to the supposed miraculous power of healing, and which seems to throw light upon the whole subject. The old man "had, by his evidence, fixed the time of an occurrence by the Queen's having been at Oxford, and touched him for the Evil, when a child." After he had finished his statement, Mr. Barrington says that he had an opportunity of enquiring from him whether he was really cured. Upon which he answered, with a significant smile, that he never believed himself to have had a complaint that deserved to be called the Evil; but that his parents, being poor, had no objection to the piece of gold.

ELIZA.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

AND now, after eighteen years, she was going to dine with Lionel Amherst. She sat alone for an hour after Clara had left her, looking out with wide-open, steadfast grey eyes into the hot and dusty street.

It was the dead season in London; everyone of consequence was out of town, and therefore Aunt Eliza had received her annual invitation to come up and do her shopping.

And at that very moment the blue waves were breaking with a long sweep on the tawny sand at Stillwater; against the pale azure of the sky gulls were circling like moving specks of silver, and breezes that carried on their wings faint saline odours from the sea, were whispering round the walls of her pretty sitting-room, and touching with fairy fingers the many tasteful trifles suspended there.

At that moment home seemed to her very dear and desirable, and yet she was resignedly stifling in town because her relatives wished to be kind while they were ashamed of her. Well, perhaps it was her own fault; she teased them, and therefore they protected themselves in the best way they could.

But Aunt Eliza laughed secretly at the

thought that she was supposed to delight in the small economy of making her purchases in the off-season. Aunt Elizadid not need to purchase left-over garments, or out-of-season fabrics; indeed, there was nothing in the way of rational expenditure that was beyond the means of this prosperous woman. It was really inconvenient to her to come to town now that her busy season had begun; but experience had taught her that it is well sometimes to yield to the wishes of others, even if their motives are not of the most exalted character. Her visit would end in a few days, and then she would go home, taking Mrs. Danver and her daughters with her for the whole golden month of September—if their engagements with Mr. Amherst permitted.

And then that previous feeling of the oddness of circumstances came back to her again, and this time it was tinged with the queerest undercurrent of pain.

Lionel Amherst had been little more than a dream-figure to her for years and years, but then he was part of the one golden dream of her life.

To a woman like Eliza Danver, love is all-satisfying, or it does not exist for her. To love and make allowances would have impossible to her. In her case love was verily blind, and the blow which taught her to see clearly killed her heart, or at least she thought so.

In after years she was able to think that the loss of her fortune, since Lionel Amherst had failed her, was not a blessing in disguise, but a blessing with its name written on its forehead. Still this had not hindered her speculating a good deal at the first as to the after consequences, had Oakdene still been hers.

If money was so important, if to own or lose it placed a life in sunshine or in shadow, then she would be rich. So she resolved at the first, and the realisation of her ambition, as so often happens, killed the pain that had first stung ambition into life.

And now, after all these years, she was to meet her boy-lover again. Curious that she could think of him only as a boy, when she had grown so mature, and serene, and satisfied.

But he was a man now, middle-aged even, and he was going to marry Jessie, her niece.

Jessie was older now than she had been in that golden summer time when he had loved her. Half-a-dozen scenes from that old romance rose dreamily before her, and

somehow she found she was blushing as she looked on them. Then she laughed audibly, struck by a whimsical sense of contrast. He loved Jessie now, and Jessie very much wished her not to speak to him of the hotel!

Well, she would not; it would be hard if his affections should be disturbed again by the incidents of her history. And that made her remember that, in this instance, at least, his affection was disinterested. But he was rich now, Clara had said so, and of course that permitted a difference in his course of action. Perhaps if he had had possessions of his own long ago, he would not have fled from her when disaster overtook her.

This thought drew a faint sigh from her, and, in a softened mood, she went downstairs, and soon became quite herself again over preparations for the evening. She had a talent for culinary work, and liked nothing better than to wear a big apron and concoct little dishes, or polish the table appliances.

"We must have everything plain and good," she said to the cook, with her pleasant smile. "Ambition on occasions like this is ruinous, and besides gentlemen are not so very fond of kickshaws, so 'good and plain' must be our motto. One of the young ladies will go out and buy some flowers. I shall set the table in the dining-room, and among us we shall have splendid results."

While the bill of fare was under consideration Jessie came down to prepare afternoon tea, and the aunt and niece grew quite interested over plans for the evening, while they discussed their tea and toast; but neither of them referred to Mr. Amherst in any way, unless their preparations were a continuous reference.

Aunt Eliza was rather tired when she went up to her own room, and she sat down to read in the easy-chair by the window, and then Clara brought her a little bouquet of crimson carnations which Jessie had sent.

Clara was already dressed, and was amazed that Aunt Eliza had not even begun her toilet. Clara looked very girlish and pretty in a frock of white nun's veiling, with forget-me-nots as blue as her eyes among the lace on her breast.

"It is nice to be young," Aunt Eliza said, and sighed again; for the first time for years, a vague feeling of discontent was stirring at her heart.

Yet, regarded simply as a human

creature, she was more attractive than either of her nieces, and perhaps some thought of that kind came to her as she brushed out her thick dark hair, and twisted it into the coil that she wore low on her neck, regardless of the dictates of fashion.

Certainly her cheek and throat were less round than they had been, and her lips were not such a brilliant crimson, but what the face had lost in contour or colouring it had more than gained in character. Her eyes were full of a serene light, and the firm mouth, in recent prosperous years, had gained a touch of sweetness.

She wore the velvet dress that Clara had specified, and a fichu of coffee-coloured lace that enhanced the whiteness of her throat, and as she fixed Jessie's crimson flowers with the diamond crescent that held the lace together, she looked at her reflection in the mirror with a distinctly pleasurable sensation.

The guests had already arrived, when she reached the drawing-room; the Curate had been asked also informally, and had been pleased to come.

Mr. Amherst was talking to Jessie, and his back was turned towards the door, when Miss Danver entered, so the Curate and she were introduced, and had uttered a few commonplaces to each other before the guest-in-chief turned round.

When he did so he saw a woman who looked like a Queen, smiling down kindly on her companion.

She was standing in the shadow of the window-curtain, and the light from the western sky caught the graceful outlines of her figure, and brought into prominence the rich fabric of her dress and the diamonds sparkling at her ears.

Mr. Amherst seemed to feel his heart stand still, then it gave a great bound, so that it was very creditable to his self-control that he was able to ask, in his usual voice, "Who is that lady?"

"It is Aunt Eliza: she has come up to town for a few days, and will be with us till Friday."

"Will you introduce me to her?"

So he was introduced, but had only time to bow before the waiter announced dinner, and then he gave his arm to Mrs. Danver, and Mr. Symonds gave his to Aunt Eliza, and the girls brought up the rear.

Jessie sat on Mr. Amherst's left, and Mr. Symonds sat between Clara and Aunt Eliza. The dinner was excellent of its kind, and the table looked very pretty; but something seemed wrong.

Mr. Amherst talked little, and what he said was not possessed of any remarkable interest; Aunt Eliza scarcely spoke at all; and only that Mr. Symonds had a hobby about the better housing of the poor, and talked of it unweariedly, the whole company would have been absolutely silent at times.

When the ladies were back in the drawing-room, Clara expressed her surprise that anyone had ever said Mr. Amherst was clever, and unhesitatingly declared him ten times more stupid than Mr. Symonds. Mrs. Danver sighed, and said nothing. Having come to the conclusion that his attentions to Jessie had been without signification, she had no further personal interest in him. The poor lady was not very clever, but it does not require brilliant genius to arrive at the conclusion, that a man in love does not allow the object of his affections to talk to him for five minutes without understanding a single word she says.

Jessie flung herself on the sofa with a yawn. She had been a goose to imagine Mr. Amherst meant anything; but, Heaven be praised! she had never let anyone suspect she thought it.

Aunt Eliza said nothing, only fanned herself, though the room had grown cool enough.

By-and-by Clara went to the piano and began to play a "piece," and, when she would have desisted on the appearance of the gentlemen, Mr. Amherst said, "please go on," in a tone that sounded somewhat like a command. Then he came over and seated himself beside Aunt Eliza.

"I have been seeking you for five years," he said in a low voice, under cover of the music.

"Indeed!"

She turned her head slowly and looked at him with her clear, keen gaze.

"I was even foolish enough to advertise for you, thinking to reach you that way."

"I scarcely ever read the papers. I have not time."

"Where are you living?"

"At Stillwater. I own the Eagle Hotel there."

At the last words her voice had unconsciously taken a clearer intonation, and so Jessie heard them. The girl rose and moved away, and there was wrath in her heart. Aunt Eliza was horrible; when she knew how they hated the hotel, and when they had begged her not to mention it! It was not because of Mr. Amherst she was

angry; he did not matter now; her indignation was against the needless unkindness of her relative.

And yet Mr. Amherst had not in the least understood what he had been told. It was Miss Danver herself who interested him, not her circumstances.

"I hope you are as little changed in heart as in face," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I hope you have never forgotten."

"Oh no, I never forgot."

"Nor I either. No woman has ever ousted you from my heart even for an hour."

She did not know what to say. She was bewildered, and amused, and pleased, and saddened all at once. That this great, bearded man, with threads of silver among the brown hair at his temples should take her by storm like this was the oddest sensation. And yet it was this very impetuosity, more than anything else, that identified the man before her with the boy-lover of her girlhood.

"I have wondered often and often," he said, taking up her fan and unfurling it slowly as he talked, "if you understood my going off as I did?"

"No, I did not understand it."

"You don't know what I felt like, when, for the first time I realised my position and yours. Do you know it was not until you lost your money, and existing things between us became impossible of continuance, that I understood what an unmanly thing it is for a man, without career or fortune, to woo an heiress; or what a base thing it is for a man to be helpless and dependent? That you had lost your home, and that I, your accepted husband, had none to offer you, smote me with conscious degradation. It was something more than despair I felt, it was dishonour. Then I wondered if you saw me with eyes similar to those with which I looked on myself, and I fled before your imagined scorn. It all comes back to me as vividly as though it were happening now," he said, passing his hand quickly across his forehead, "and I feel the same sensation of being crushed."

"Strange!" she said, dreamily. "To me it is all as far away as if it were the story of another's life."

"Then you must have cared far less than I did. You have been present with me every hour since we parted; you have saved me from a hundred temptations, and guided me to a score of honourable triumphs. Once, when I had been in New

York about a year, I had a chance of making a fortune in one of the dishonest ways that the world calls honest enough; but I put it away from me for your sake, and laid fifteen years of further waiting on my shoulders. You remember Jacob, and what a model of constancy he was? Well, I have distanced Jacob. Shall I have Jacob's reward?"

She turned her face away and did not answer, for she was blushing.

She hardly understood herself or her mood. After eighteen years love had come back to her like this, and she was not dismayed nor angry; bewildered rather, in a pleasurable way. That her practical, busy, successful life, the life that had engrossed her for years, should be calmly set aside as of no moment, and that she should again be regarded as a girl to be sought and won, was startling.

And she had been so angry with him, so scornful of him, so sure that he could never explain himself into her good graces again; and lo! he had never tried to explain; had shown no conscious sense of guilt; had simply said, "I went away because I could not claim you, and now that I can claim you I am here."

At this juncture Clara left the piano, and the conversation became general, when the coffee was brought in, and by-and-by the gentlemen said good-night and went away.

"I shall call to-morrow," Mr. Amherst said, addressing himself to no one in particular, and then he shook hands with them all and went out, but when he had parted from Mr. Symonds at the street corner, he retraced his steps, and told the waiter, who opened the door to him, that he had a word to say to Miss Danver, and the waiter of course misunderstood, and sent Jessie, and poor Lionel had no excuse whatever to offer her for his return, and went away crestfallen.

That set them all laughing a little, till Clara turned vivacious and said: "Aunt Eliza, you eclipsed every one this evening. Mr. Amherst had eyes for no one but you." Then Aunt Eliza, remembering that, in family difficulties, honesty is the best policy, said, after a little pause, "Mr. Amherst and I were engaged to be married eighteen years ago."

"Then of course it was you he came back to speak to to-night," Jessie said, and laughed in quite a heart-whole way. But she had received a shock, nevertheless; and when Aunt Eliza had gone to her

own room she seized on Clara, and said with a little fierceness: "You did not talk any nonsense to her about that man and any of us!" And Clara trembled and said "No."

"It is all as clear as daylight now," the elder girl continued; "he wanted to know us that he might find out about her."

And Clara added after a pause, "We shall miss our summers at Stillwater dreadfully."

"It is not so certain that she will marry him," Jessie said, with a reflective head-shake. "If I were in her place, and did not mind the hotel, I would not marry even a royal personage. When a woman is rich and independent, what in the world can she want with any man?"

"She will marry him, you will see." Clara felt no interest in abstract discussion.

And Clara was right, for when Mr. Amherst came next day, and Aunt Eliza, by command of her nieces, went down to receive him, he simply took her in his arms and kissed her, and after that there did not seem so very much more to be said.

Seeing how proud she had been of her independence, it seemed the oddest thing possible to Aunt Eliza afterwards, that when he said, "We shall be married in October," she had never uttered a protest.

"And to think that Mr. Amherst does not mind a bit about the hotel," Clara cried, when discussing the renewed engagement with her mother and sister, "and his family as old as the Conquest."

"Perhaps that is the very reason why he does not mind it, on the principle that extremes meet."

But people may philosophise on a subject without altogether loving it. Even when Jessie was a married woman she never heard Aunt Eliza mention Stillwater without a shudder. And certainly Aunt Eliza is a provoking woman in this particular, that she never can receive a compliment on her domestic management or her charming dinner parties without perversely explaining the source of her experience.

"I wonder is she a lady in her heart really!" Clara asked once, with a petulant stamp of her pretty foot.

"Her husband and other very nice people seem to think so," Jessie answered, with a little shrug of the shoulders. "And though I won't deny my own personal prejudices, the reasoning part of my intelligence recognises how strong, and sensible, and superior to the whole of us she has always been."

ALONG THE ADRIATIC.

PART I. BRINDISI.

WE landed at Brindisi in no very excellent humour. Instead of coming direct from Corinth in the well-appointed steamer of the Austrian Lloyds, we were bidden to shift our quarters in Corfu harbour, changing into a cramped dirty Italian vessel, resplendent with fly-blown gilding and mirrors. The rumour of cholera in Southern Italy had put the steamship companies into difficulty; as it was manifestly ridiculous that a boat plying between Corinth and Brindisi once a week, should have to undergo a ten days' quarantine every time it entered Brindisi. Hence the transfer at Corfu.

Again, our company on the Italian boat was not of the nicest, and as the deck room was limited, we had almost to sit on each other's knees.

And as if this were not sufficient punishment for our sins, we had been made to suffer a bad night in the Adriatic. The ship harboured insects; she also rolled. The wind veered to the south and, gave us a hot muggy atmosphere; and by the time we got to the landing stage of Brindisi, this had culminated in a dismal drizzle.

"I must inform you that twelve people died of cholera in Brindisi yesterday, and that there were any number of fresh cases which may or may not end fatally. Moreover, I am very sorry to say you have missed the train for the north. It left half an hour ago. You will therefore have to sleep in Brindisi."

A knot of us passengers standing on the greasy deck in the mist were thus addressed by an amiable gentleman, who seemed to have come on board simply and solely to depress our spirits. It was, perhaps, well for him that he went elsewhere as soon as he had finished his say. To complete my despair, the Customs' officers espied a cigarette in one of my pockets, and insisted on seeing the contents of the other six pockets I bore about me. The result of this was a duty upon the tobacco equal to about two-thirds of the worth of the tobacco in Greece. The cigarettes were for private smoking, but the Customs' officers cared nothing for that.

Brindisi is a city of some seventeen thousand inhabitants, picturesque to a Northerner because of its semi-tropical aspect, but otherwise a noisome hole to be

avoided. It has a prodigiously long history, which may be to its credit or discredit. Virgil, as all the world knows, died here. If he were at all disposed to die, previous to reaching Brindisi on his way to Rome, this would be the very place to carry him off. Even now its flat alluvial environs reek with malaria, but before the nineteenth-century engineers inaugurated the large draining processes which keep its harbour from stagnating, it must have been a perfect plague-pit. Had Horace continued the Satire descriptive of his and Mæcenas's journey from Rome to Brindisi, the epilogue might have told us that he was laid by the heels in the Brindisium, which was "*longæ finis viæ*." But the assumption is fair that, since he does but name the place, whereas elsewhere on the journey he finds words of praise or dispraise to bestow, Brindisi in his time was remarkable for nothing except being the terminus of the Appian Way.

We walked through and round about the city, and found much to amuse us. Many of the old Venetian buildings survive, though their exceedingly ornate porticoes are in no harmony with the undignified mortals who swarm by scores on the different flats of the lodging-houses, to which these fine houses are degraded. The streets are narrow, and the buildings so tall that the sun can have little to do with the thoroughfares. But as if the urban architecture were not arranged to secure sufficient coolness for the townspeople, these love heat, it seems, to live in low dark basements or cellar rooms, that look as if they were cut out of a rock. Whole families herd in a single room. The two or three great beds that stand at angles to each other, will each hold four or five individuals. Some we see already occupied in the afternoon. But ordinarily the inhabitants of the house are sprawling about the threshold, or turning the spinning-wheel, or kneading dough, or making boots. One feature is never wanting in these habitable caves—a gaudy little shrine in one of the corners facing the door, with a swing lamp hanging before a picture or model of the Virgin.

The colours of Brindisi, like its latitude, are semi-tropical. Even on this dull day, we could enjoy the olives, and pinks, and light greens and greys of the houses. At a distance they are white; but close at hand the illusion goes. Then the dress of the people is as vivid as the tone of their lustrous skin or their fine black eyes. The

men, for the most part, go about in blue blouses, with little or nothing underneath; but the women coruscate with necklets of metal and glass, and are as gay as rain-bows besides, in parti-coloured cotton and wool. The lasses loved being sketched, moreover. They stuck their plump arms akimbo, set themselves well on their legs, and stood like things of brass as long as they were asked to stand. It was pretty, again, to see them in the market-place, sitting in the midst of great heaps of vivid oranges. But as hucksters they are a little importunate, and it is not every man that would feel at ease with the arms of a siren beautiful as Cleopatra tight round his neck, beseeching him to buy. Again, not every one can admire the association of tobacco and beauty: and yet some of these pretty girls sat demure with pipes in their mouths.

There was bustle or prattle enough wherever we walked the streets, amidst foul smells and litter of garbage; and to the bulk of Brindisi's seventeen thousand people it seemed nothing at all that they had the cholera devouring in their midst, striking down a man every hour of the twenty-four.

By alleys and roads like ditches, we found our way beyond the boundaries of brick and stone. We were in the midst of little vineyards, just sprouting into leaf, of almond-trees in full fruit, fig-trees thick with the first crop of futile figs, pear and apricot trees sweet with blossom. The thoroughfares were marked by hedges of great cactus, or soaring masses of prickly pear, lifting their doll-like heads one over the other. Here and there were groups of rugged old olives, looking like things petrified in the midst of a death agony; a few orange trees perfuming the warm, drowsy air; some cypress points; and a bare half-dozen of real palm trees, strong and healthy as if they were on African soil. But the most notable thing of all outside the town is the decaying wall, which once girt the town, with its dilapidated towers and crumbling heaps. Dogs, clay-coloured like the wall and towers, lay in the holes which honeycombed this ancient cincture, and countrymen from the market, returning home, drove their mules with a jingle of bells through this or that breach which time and persistent feet had made in this once-strong fortification. These walls may have seen the Crusaders, very many of whom found Brindisi a convenient place to die in; but I suppose they can

hardly go back to Cæsar and Pompey, who, once upon a time, fought, or rather struggled, face to face in Brindisi. Viewing the town and harbour and grey-green surroundings from this vantage-point, one is forced to a conclusion that, however comfortable to an Englishman, is somewhat sad to the cosmopolitan with a little sentiment left in him. It is this: that the few graces of antiquity which redeem Brindisi from the category of ugly places are doomed soon to go. The P. and O. steamers are excellent nutriment for the town. House property is so much in request that it appears quite desirable to steal stones from the city walls, and build them into houses whenever the whim takes a man. We saw numbers of such buildings fed on such unholy quarry; so that soon the walls will disappear, or be applied as substantial foundation for a crescent of houses to be called Via East India or Via Jolly Tars, according to the degree of culture or wealth of the speculator. In the town one sees several little canteens which, below the ordinary Italian announcement of "Vino, etc.," have scratched on their sign-board the seductive monosyllable "Grog!" And I may further say that, in one of Brindisi's streets, we were hailed tempestuously by a knot of unpleasant native ladies with a volley of unvarnished British seamen's oaths. These women did not mean to be rude, I think, but they left upon us a bad impression.

Of course, Brindisi has its patron saint, who in extreme cases will work a miracle. But there is really much to be said in praise of the Saint Lorenzo da Brindisi, who, next to the Virgin, is most frequently on the lips of a good Catholic of the town. He is not like Saint Nicholas of Bari—a large town a few hours' ride from Brindisi—who, although he has been dead almost a millennium, keeps his bones ever moist and ready to do good deeds at the request of the guardian dignitaries. This Saint Nicholas is, indeed, one of the oddest of the many odd saints held in reverence by the Italians. A friend of mine visited the town simply and solely to obtain the wonder-working fluid which trickles periodically from his bones. It is called the manna of Saint Nicholas; but, whatever it may be made of, I doubt whether it is consumed like the manna of Palestine. My friend returned to Brindisi with a small phial of this exudation of Saint Nicholas. He paid twopence for it, and if it had but one of

the many fine properties that are ascribed to it, the purchase was cheap enough.

But to return to Saint Lorenzo of Brindisi, who, from his birth to his death, was so remarkably in contrast with the men of the present day, that I shall not scruple to give a few particulars about him. He was born at Brindisi in 1559, of rather common parents. His father found him so attractive a baby, that for long he was uncertain whether he was a heavenly or a terrestrial being. As soon as he could crawl, his unusual excellences were made apparent. He declined to play with other little children, and struck every one dumb with admiration by the mild modesty of his deportment. At four, young Lorenzo said, he would like to be a monk when he became a man. At seven, he was allowed to enter the pulpit of the Cathedral of Brindisi, whence he preached sermons that made profound sensation among their hearers. And, by this time, he had so completely severed himself from the trivial lot of ordinary men, that on the death of his father he showed a resignation and indifference that were as astounding as any previous incident in his young career.

His mother now took the austere little Lorenzo from Brindisi to Venice, where was a religious uncle, who received him with enthusiasm. Lorenzo found here a little cousin after his own heart. The two boys, not yet in their teens, were wont to spend all the time, not exacted by their schoolmasters, in religious disputations. One day, they were returning from church in a crowded gondola, when a storm arose. The boat was instantly in dire peril; but Lorenzo was in it, and when the boy stood up and made the sign of the Cross, the winds were appeased, and the waves fell flat. Shortly after this, the lads were admitted to the Order of the Capuchins as postulants. Already, Lorenzo had fitted himself for his life of self-denial by wearing a hair shirt of a peculiarly irritating kind, by night as well as by day, and by fasting three days in the week. And his conduct and austerities were such, that at the early age of sixteen he was finally promoted into that Order as Fra Lorenzo da Brindisi.

Now it was that the lad began to suffer for the unnatural restraints he had put upon his unfortunate body. He was threatened with consumption; but, having conquered this enemy, he was sent away to Sicily, where he soon made his mark as a man who could, after a single hearing, repeat this or that sermon word

for word. He also took up linguistic studies, and was speedily at home in Spanish, French, Bohemian, German, Greek, Chaldean, Syriac, and Hebrew. The rabbi, with whom he was sent to argue on sacred subjects, would not believe that he was not a Hebrew; and so of the Spaniards, French, Germans, etc. The modesty which had characterised Lorenzo as a baby clung to him as a monk. His good qualities were apparent to every one but himself. His superiors, in nominating him for this or that responsible mission in Italy, or Germany, or Spain, always had to enforce their nominations with commands; and it was thus at their bidding only that he consented to go before the Popes of Rome; to visit Vienna and the Archduke Matthias, for negotiatory purposes; and make the acquaintance of the mighty Emperor of Spain and the Netherlands. But, wherever Lorenzo went, he won reverent goodwill and friends.

At one time he was leading Christian armies against countless hordes of Moslems (myriads of bullets raining about him and the crucifix that he carried) and always with success; at another he was being honoured with successive private interviews by Philip the Third of Spain, who treated him with the regard of a brother. Of the many miracles which marked his course in life, perhaps the most noteworthy is that whereby one day he was held suspended between earth and heaven for several hours. But after his death (in Lisbon, whither he had gone in pursuit of the King of Spain) certain wonders occurred which may be said to eclipse even this. At the moment of dying he was a lean man, worn and emaciated by self-imposed penance; but shortly afterwards his body, in the words of the chronicler, was found to be "*bellissimo, vermiglio, e fresco come un immacolato fiore*" (ruddy, well-favoured, and sweet as a spotless flower).

Again, about two days after his death, it was proposed to open the body of Lorenzo. Certain of the doctors objected: it was the time of summer; it was late even to bury him, much more to make a post-mortem examination of him. However, the King insisted, and then, marvellous to say, Lorenzo's corpse began to emit so sweet a savour that all who attended the operation were ravished by the perfume. Never, they said, had they enjoyed so celestial an experience. Then Lorenzo was buried with great honour. In 1783 he was canonised, after the examina-

tion of the proofs of two well-authenticated miracles worked in his name. And so he does honour to Brindisi, and Brindisi does honour to his memory.

The untidy old sacristan, who showed us the Cathedral, made much of a heap of bones and iron rings that were kept in a cupboard of the north transept. They were of incredible sanctity, he said. I am sorry to say, however, that we were followed up the aisle of the church and to the very threshold of the cupboard by a brace of tall, thin dogs, who sniffed at the bones as if they, at least, had no ideal reverence for such relics. This cathedral has also a mosaiced pavement of a strange and very ancient type; an altar-piece three hundred years old, passable enough as a work of art; a gorgeous ceiling; and a door so quaintly and laboriously carved in panels that it is the object in Brindisi best worth seeing. But as a building it is so dirty that the very dogs, who were allowed to come in with us, looked where they set their feet, as they pattered daintily over its stones.

Before going for the night to the hotel, to which we had been inveigled in the wake of our baggage, we had two other objects of interest to see. The one is the ancient tower of a disused church, standing up in file with the paltry shops and dwelling-houses of the street in which it is situated. Our guide had so singular a grin on his sallow face, when he set us upon the staircase leading to the top of this tower, that I could not but suspect him of evil design or an evil conscience.

"Now then," said I, "what is this place, and what is there to see at the top when we get there? I don't go up till you tell me. That's a fact, *per Bacco*."

"Nothing, Signor, nothing at all," replied the man, with a fluster of gesticulations. "I do not ascend with you because of the leg—I am bad in the leg, and Mariucciana, the wife, would not wish me to exert myself."

"But if there is nothing to see, why should we take the trouble to climb it?"

"As you will, Signor."

But the man's shrug of the shoulder and resignation had so much of mystery about them, that we all stumbled up the steps without delay.

To be sure there was nothing to see, except an old clock face, the interior of a number of neighbouring back-yards, the masts of some ships, and the dusky water of the harbour. We were much disturbed

by the thought that we had been behaving like the most irresponsible of automatic tourists. But ere we had got half-way down the steps again, some one cried out that he had the cramp in his right knee. The next moment every man jack of us had the cramp also in the same place; and by the time we were at the bottom of the steps, with the grinning Italian puffing a cigarette in our faces, we were all bending and rubbing our knee-caps.

"It is always so, Signor," said the Italian, emitting a long, cool whiff of tobacco smoke. "It is certainly a strange thing, is it not?"

"And so you brought us here to give us the cramp, did you, and stayed down below to escape it yourself? That was certainly a very cowardly way to behave."

"But, Signor——" protested the man.

However, as by this time the cramp had left us as suddenly as it had come to us, we determined to say no more about it. None of the theories put before us in explanation of this disagreeable peculiarity of the old church tower seemed very satisfactory. If it was true that the ghost of a reverend Father lay in waiting at the fortieth stair to grip a leg of every passer-by, why did he not do it in the ascent as well as the descent? A rheumatic chill, indigenous on a particular square foot of the stone, would not have seized us with such extraordinary simultaneity. Nor did we think much of the Italian's last suggestion, that the architect and builder between them had bungled the building, and by setting two or three lumps of masonry awry in a very peculiar way, made it impossible to get over these without physical discomfiture. This only can be said: that just as we suffered in the old tower, so may you—and you may theorise as we theorised.

After the tower we climbed through sundry bad quarters of the town, where no doubt the cholera was very thick, to a stone terrace overlooking the important civic buildings which stand close to the harbour sea-board. Here was the famous decorated column supposed to mark the end of the Appian Way. It is a fine stone with a capital carved to represent the torsos of burly gods instead of acanthus leaves. Near it were sundry other fragments of columns, and inscribed stones. The residents round about had no very intense respect for these old relics. They had strung clothes-lines from one to the other of them, and while we examined

their writing and ornament, and conjectured about the marvellous sights they might have seen had they been endowed with eyes, ladies of stout build, with their gowns tucked up to their knees, passed to and fro with reeking linen and flannel unmentionables, which they hung out to dry. During the process of their labours these good souls made very uncomplimentary remarks about the looks and dress of the English; they also said very prettily the one to the other that England must be but a poor place if English people thought it worth their while to climb the "strada" to look at such lumps of stone as these, which were by no means the best things of their kind, even for a drying ground. And herein, perhaps, they were not far wrong. We were loudly jeered by the rascally children of these dames of Brindisi, when we began to return to the highway. It was already past sunset time, so we made our way to the hotel which had been chosen for us in despite of our wishes.

You see, landing at these Levantine ports is always so much of a scrimmage that unless you are monstrously wide-awake, you are fast in the hands of a strong factotum of this or that hotel before you know where you are. It was so here at Brindisi. In a moment of forgetfulness, I had lost sight of our baggage, and only chanced to see it when it was in full gallop along a street towards a hotel of which I knew nothing. This was annoying to begin with. But as a compromise it was settled that we should make the best of matters, and see to what sort of a place our baggage had led us.

Now in Brindisi there are but two hotels fit to lodge a British bull-dog; the one is the stately red building close to the landing stage, with a bit of a court-yard planted with tropical plants, and a full staff of officials, conveniences, and luxuries. Here they speak English and every other language, including, I believe, a little Hindustanee for the benefit of travelling East Indians, who leave the steamer and go overland to England with the mails. It is an imposing hotel, where they make a charge for a chair; but it is comfortable. The other hotel is not bad, viewed from the street. Indeed, its windows, some ten feet high, and its heavy balconies, appeal to the imagination; but it is very different to the other. It is kept by a Greek named Grapsa, who might, without injustice to himself, transpose the "p" and the "s" in his name, and who speaks no English. It

was to Grapsa's house that our baggage went tearing along, and eventually thither we went in the wake of it. Grapsa, the Greek—fat, sleek, yellow, small-eyed, and wearing a fez—received us with much rubbing of hands, and lively assurances that he felt the honour we had done in selecting his hotel.

I do not propose to go into the minute history of our experiences in Grapsa's hands. He gave us palatial bed-rooms, paved with red and white marble flags, and with bright blue wall papers. At our every movement he was afoot to see what we wanted, or his sad-looking son, a man of thirty, who had learnt just enough French to puzzle himself with. And the cook in Grapsa's hotel was by no means a fool. But there was an atmosphere of impending doom in the place that was not cheerful. In the "salon" I talked with two gentlemen, who constituted the number of other guests in the building. The one was a schoolmaster at Corfu, a leathery old gentleman with long yellow teeth, who corrected my pronunciation of Greek in a very magisterial manner; and the other was a vivacious young man from Amsterdam, resting there on his way to his parents in the same Island of Corfu. Both these gentlemen mentioned Grapsa's name with awe. The younger one whispered that he was even something of a prisoner. He had asked for his bill the other day, and it was so preposterous that he could not pay it. He had calculated his expenses from Amsterdam to Corfu to a nicety; he had his ticket for the steamer; and here he was, within twelve hours' steam of his parents' arms, practically held at ransom! Vain was it for him to promise that he would send the money to Grapsa from Corfu. Grapsa preferred that the poor young man should spend a week with him, which would be the amount of time before a letter could receive answer from Corfu, enclosing a remittance.

"And in the meantime," moaned the poor fellow, "I'm running up a new bill for this horrible week, also. The money will not suffice, and I shall be detained longer, and the leave of absence I hold from my employers in Amsterdam will soon have half expired, and I shall not be able to see my dear father and mother for another five years."

After that, we were much inclined as a body to turn the tables upon this Grapsa by some forcible measure. But, enough of him. He is a nauseous subject, in spite of

his good cooking. He gave us soft beds with plenty of fleas in them, and on the day of our departure, presented us with a bill a foot long, which I succeeded in getting acquitted at a composition of sixty per cent. As for our two unfortunate comrades, we gave them our best wishes, and expostulated with Grapsa on behalf of the younger of them to such good purpose, that the rascal promised to be lenient. But I fear that Grapsa was of the mind of Talleyrand, and made use of speech merely to conceal his wicked intentions.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcotes," etc.

CHAPTER IX.

ALL this time the friendship between Tilly and Miss Walton was progressing very comfortably.

Naturally, it made larger strides on Tilly's part, because friendship was a greater novelty in her life, and it had, therefore, more piquancy and relish. Miss Walton, who had the advantage of superior age and experience, was, one might almost say, blasé in this respect, and had less enthusiasm to spare than in the days when she corresponded with sixteen fellow school-girls and called each of them her dearest; but she was very much charmed with Tilly, and quite willing to meet her at least a quarter of the way in that oft-travelled ground.

Uncle Bob was an almost equally interesting study to this astute young person, though her opportunities of observation were few; for Uncle Bob, loud and unblushing as he was with men, was undeniably shy in the presence of ladies.

For a time after Miss Walton's conquest of Tilly, he was but little seen in the red velvet sitting-room, which was mainly given over to snips, shreds, patterns, bandboxes, and girls' chatter. It was that chatter that alarmed him, and sent him off precipitately to take refuge with his Behrens.

Miss Walton, who had lingered on in defiance of propriety and Mrs. Thompson, bent on cementing her friendship and securing it beyond hazard, was very glad to share the bright sitting-room. For herself, she could only afford a bed-room, and that a small and unluxurious one at the top of the house, where the chambermaid

is apt to stint her attentions and to be deaf to appeals for hot water.

Down in Tilly's vast first-floor room the machinery of service went much more smoothly; life was worth living there; and Tilly, happy Tilly! had everything she wanted, even to the society of Honoria, which she coveted more and more. But it was no part of Honoria's scheme to ignore or exclude Uncle Bob. Mr. Burton's character seemed to her to be one that would "repay perusal," as good-natured critics say of books. The time would not be wasted that was spent in studying him; she wished to know him, if it were only to contradict Maria, who was always breathing forth warnings and injunctions from the North. So one day, while she and Tilly sat together, she remarked:

"Your uncle very seldom pays you a visit now."

"He is afraid of you," said Tilly with a laugh. "You inspire him with awe! How nice it must be to inspire anybody with awe! That's a privilege you tall and majestic people keep all to yourselves. Nobody ever was afraid of a person of my inches."

"If that is the reason why he stays away, it need not exist any longer."

"I don't see it. You can't help being stately, and you certainly can't help being tall."

"But I can stay away."

"Well," said Tilly with a shake of her sunny head, "I think I'm being very badly used. First Uncle Bob deserts me, and now you propose to do the same. I will not be deserted. There!" she jumped up and skimmed across the room, "he is trying to do it again! I have caught you this time, Uncle Bob; you can't escape," she said, for Mr. Burton, who had put a cautious head in at the door, was gently struggling to free himself from the little hands that held him prisoner.

"There!" she said, leading in her captive, looking very sheepish and red in the face, "and now, sir, will you please tell me what it is you find so alarming in my friend? She is not so haughty as she looks, she will not snub you, I believe, if you address her very humbly and respectfully."

Honoria laughed and held out her hand.

"Mr. Burton would give me a better character than his niece," she said.

"Do you hear that, Uncle Bob? She is not afraid of you, you see; it is me she

is really afraid of, so you'd better stay and protect her."

"Stay on better grounds than that. Stay to give us pleasure," said Honoria frankly.

"You are very kind, mem," said Uncle Bob, recovering his manners and making his best bow; "I'm but a rough chap, but if you're willing to put up with me, I'm proud to stop a bit with you and my lass here."

"Then that's settled," said Tilly gaily, "and here is your very own chair, and now I feel safe again. Do you know, if you had gone away, Miss Walton would have gone too, and I should have been sacrificed to etiquette and abandoned to silence. Now, Uncle Bob, you may hold this skein, and while I wind it I am going to talk—we are going to talk—and you must please listen attentively, for it is a very important scheme indeed we are going to unfold."

"A scheme, eh? What's that?"

"A plan, a proposal, a suggestion," said Tilly airily; "a mere 'suppose.' You like 'supposes,' Uncle Bob. Do you remember what a heap of them we used up when we talked of coming to London?"

"Ay, and here we are in London, and there's a good deal of supposing to be done yet, it seems to me."

"That's just it. A good deal to be done yet. Well, Miss Walton and I have been doing some of it—to save time. We've supposed, for instance, that we none of us can live all the rest of our lives in an hotel. Even Mr. Paul Behrens, I should think, doesn't mean to do that——"

"That's just what he's been saying," struck in Mr. Burton. "He says it every day. 'Why don't you take a house?' he says. He's a knowing chap; he can help us, Tilly. He's a Londoner, or as good as a Londoner, you see. They're a sharp lot, these Cockneys. Meaning no offence to you, mem," he suddenly pulled himself up and looked confusedly at Miss Walton.

"Oh, I'm not a Londoner in that sense," she smiled. "I wasn't born within sound of Bow Bells."

"I shouldn't think Mr. Behrens was, either," remarked Tilly. "Well, never mind; we are all agreed as to his sharpness. And what does he want us to do, Uncle Bob?"

"Well, you see, this is how he puts it. 'What you want,' he says, 'is to get into society, into the best sort of society, where your niece would have the advantages

she deserves, and where she would shine.' These were his words, Tilly—he thinks a deal of you, my lass."

"Oh, he does, does he?" said Tilly lightly, "how very kind of him, to be sure!"

"There's sense in what he says," the narrator continued. "You can't expect folks to believe in you unless you give them some kind of a guarantee; it's not enough to say you're rich—you've got to prove it. You've got to push yourself to the front and assert yourself; you've got to cut a dash," the speaker warmed with his theme; "show them that you're not afraid of being somebody—fling your money about freely, and they'll believe you fast enough."

"It sounds an exceedingly unpleasant prescription," said Tilly, letting fall her work and going to perch herself on the arm of his chair, "and as difficult as it is unpleasant. How, for instance, does one 'cut a dash'?"

"You'll learn that soon enough!" he retorted, pinching her ear. "Difficult? There's nothing easier, with a pile like mine to dip into. You wait till Behrens gets me the horses he has an eye on—and the house. We'll send over to Paris for the furniture; I guess, when you're bowling along in your own carriage, the rest will come easy enough—"

"It seems to me," said the girl gravely, "that Mr. Behrens is to do everything. He is to choose the house and the horses—no doubt he will give me lessons, too, in 'cutting a dash'; I dare say he will even help us to 'fling the money about.'"

Honorias, who had taken no part in the discussion, looked up rather sharply. Did this pretty, innocent-looking Tilly mean to be sarcastic? There were no signs of such intention in the look she bent on her uncle. It was a very affectionate look.

"I'm afraid I'm not equal to all that splendour yet, dear," she said. "I couldn't live up to it—just yet. I must be educated first; I am only a girl from the country—"

"You're good enough for me," he said with a dogged and mutinous air.

"Of course I'm good enough for you!" she retorted gaily. "I'm even good enough for Miss Walton—so she says," she cast a merry look at her friend, "but I'm not good enough yet for the honours Mr. Behrens would thrust upon me. I'm coming to them by-and-by; perhaps I have even ambitions for us beyond these,

but I want to get used to things a little first."

"Well, and how are you going to do that?" he asked, with a half distrustful look at Miss Walton, who appeared to him to have been sowing a great deal of revolutionary seed in Tilly's mind.

"That belongs to our 'suppose.' It is this—"

"Tilly," interrupted Honorias, suddenly rising, "I am going to leave you to discuss matters with your uncle alone. It is no business of mine how you settle this affair. Oh, I know what you are going to say—the suggestion was mine. Well, so it was; but my absence makes it all the easier for you to reject it if you don't like it. You will, in any case, talk it over better without me," and, not waiting for any remonstrance, she left the room.

Tilly looked after her with a shadow of disappointment; her cause was the feeblér without this ally. But Uncle Bob applauded the action.

"She's right, my lass," he said; "she's got no business, as she says, to meddle between you and me, though she is your friend."

There was a hint of jealousy in his tone.

"I think Mr. Paul Behrens meddles, though he is your friend," she retorted with a laugh.

"Well," said her uncle dispassionately, "there's no call to follow the one or the other of them unless we like. I guess we can choose for ourselves. Now, what in the name of creation is this fine plan of yours? Out with it, my lass; it's close upon one o'clock, and I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"It's only a 'suppose.' I want you to understand that to begin with. Suppose we go to a boarding-house? I have been studying the question of boarding-houses lately, and they seem to have been created on purpose for people like you and me."

"What's there different in you and me from other people," he demanded with a sort of grim good-humour, "except that I'm richer and you're prettier than most folks?"

"Let us put it that way," she assented gaily, her hand on his shoulder keeping time as it rose and fell to her words. "You're too pretty—no, you're too rich and I'm too pretty—for us to live in a big house all by ourselves, even with Mr. Paul Behrens for our guide, philosopher, and friend. When I've learnt to 'cut a dash' it will be different; but I think I'd like to

begin by shining in a boarding-house—a charming, select, refined boarding-house. I've been studying the advertisements in the 'Daily Telegraph,' you see, and I have the advantages off by heart. There don't seem to be any disadvantages. It's home and society nicely blended into one. If we're to make a circle—and that seems to be what is expected of us—a boarding-house is our chance."

"I suppose Miss Walton has put this notion into your head," said Uncle Bob, receiving the proposal with lukewarm hospitality and characteristic national distrust. Liliesmuir is innocent of a boarding-house, and if there are any in China, in Western America, and in the Australian Bush, they are probably not the places to which one would, of free choice, take a pretty young girl. Then the idea had not emanated from that oracle, Mr. Paul Behrens. Mr. Behrens's mind remained unplumbed on the subject, there was no calculating on his sentiments. He might approve, but he might condemn. As for Miss Walton, her approval went for very little; for though she was a lady, and as such an object of respect to one who had no traditions, she was but a young lass, and what could a young lass know?

"It's all very well for her to talk," he exclaimed, "but I'll warrant you she wouldn't be so keen to go to one herself."

"Well, yes," said Tilly gravely, "she is going to one, and that's why she wants us to go too."

If Mr. Burton had known a little more of the world—or rather of the modern attitude of young womanhood towards the world—he would not have been staggered by this reply. He had thought for a moment that Miss Walton, considering Tilly her social inferior, had offered a suggestion which she would not have desired to follow in her own person; but it appeared that he was doing the young woman an injury.

Miss Walton was not only going to a boarding-house; she had gone to many. She knew their tricks and manners off by heart. She had migrated in summer to the suburban mansion where the tennis-ball is sent briskly flying and croquet and flirtation still linger. With winter she had flitted back to the joys of communistic life in Bayswater and Kensington. If Uncle

Bob considered this a strong-minded proceeding on the part of a "real lady," it only shows how antique, how archaic, were his views.

Shrinking modesty and timidity have gone out of fashion; they are as out of date as the spleen and the vapours. No well-brought-up mother is ever astonished nowadays at any proposal her daughter may make, at any experience she may set herself to fathom. If Jessie were to announce her intention of living in chambers; if Emma packed her trunk and departed to make trial of lodgings, mamma would quite understand that remonstrance was useless, and, compared with these, existence in a boarding-house is a comparatively decorous, blameless, chaperoned affair. Miss Walton had no mamma to shock; and, since in these days, nobody is too young to do anything she likes, there was probably no reason to be shocked at all.

Having seen that her little arrow sped home, Tilly was merciful in her triumph.

"Talk it over with Mr. Behrens, dear," she said. "He is Sir Oracle to us. You will believe if he says it is all right? And, after all, it's only a 'suppose'; it need never get beyond that if you don't like it."

"Well, we'll see, we'll see," he got up heavily. "I won't just say that Behrens knows everything," he remarked as he was leaving her, "and I don't hold with folks that must always be running to others for advice. I've got a pair of eyes in my head, and I guess I can use them as well as most. If it's to be a boarding-house—and, mind you, I don't say it is—or if it's to be a house—and I don't say it's to be that neither—it will be Bob Burton that will have the last word to say in the matter, I can tell you!"

"As if he didn't always get his own way, poor Uncle Bob!" said Tilly, looking at him in her frank, audacious, laughing way.

There was no fear of these two misunderstanding each other; no dread of wills that should clash. Tilly told herself nightly in her prayers, which were as yet all thanksgivings, that she owed everything, everything—all the pleasures of her past, all the joys and coming triumphs of her future, to this kind uncle. Surely her faith, and her love, and her service, were a very little price to pay for these!

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 969. NEW SERIES

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durdan," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER V. "A WAR OF INTELLECTS."

THERE was a moment's silence after those words.

At last Adrian Lyle lifted his head and looked straight into the beautiful, mocking eyes.

"Is that a challenge?" he asked; and something of sternness and rebuke in his voice brought the colour to Alexis Kenyon's cheek.

"Would you accept it?" she asked, "if I said—yes."

"Assuredly," he answered. "He is a poor soldier who denies his colours. Your creed would be a cold, comfortless thing when sorrow and bereavement touched your heart. You may well say there can be no use in appealing to an unknown Power who cares for neither suffering nor prayer. You make all the gifts, purposes, and good of life of no effect at once; whereas our religion teaches that all things have a wise purpose, a destined end; that our aspirations and ideals cannot sink into dust and ashes with the decay of the body, but live on and on to attain higher perfection in a Future, that an all-powerful Mercy and an all-perfect Wisdom has destined."

"Words," she said, "but not proof. All you ministers have the same vague platitudes; but when we want to bring you down to a plain and natural explanation, you take refuge in these poetic flights. You like plain speaking. I have listened to your sermons, and I know you are enthusiastic; but enthusiasm would never

convince me. I pity all the poor and struggling souls that doubt as I have doubted, and all to no end, to no purpose."

"I think," said Adrian Lyle, "that even in doubt there is an end and a purpose. A Hand may be guiding you to light even when you least expect it. The ground must be broken up before the foundations can be laid. The birth-hour of Truth is often heralded by the dark night of Disbelief."

"Oh, I am not an Atheist," she replied. "Only, as I told you, I have thought a great deal about this subject, and read and discussed it, too—as yet, without result."

"It is a great subject," said Adrian Lyle gravely, "and one that finite minds can never quite explain. To my thinking it has always seemed that the highest morality, the noblest type of life, is the religious life. If modern writers could give one anything better than the precepts of Christianity, anything that would comfort, sustain, console, I should not mind their doctrine so much; but they take away what is bread, and put a stone in place of it."

"You believe, then, all you preach?" she asked inquiringly.

"Most decidedly," he answered. "Else would I never have insulted my Master's service by professing it."

"In that case," she said, "we argue from totally different premises. I have accepted a theory which to you seems blasphemous. You answer my questions by statements of your own faith. Had I that faith, there would be no need to argue. But I have it not. I believe that every breach of the natural and moral law entails an adequate penalty; but no prayer or penitence can avert such penalty. Therefore, prayer and penitence are but

him into the library, instead of suggesting that they should follow Alexis as usual.

"I want a few words with you, Mr. Lyle," he said. "You know I am a plain-spoken man, and I think it best for both our sakes to take you into my confidence. You are a friend of my nephew's, so perhaps you are aware how fond I am of the boy. I have always looked upon him as a son in fact, and my earnest hope was that one day he would become so in reality. Well, I am happy to say my wishes are on the way to be realised. Before going abroad Neale proposed to my daughter, and she accepted him."

"Impossible!" broke from Adrian Lyle, as he sprang to his feet, pale and disturbed. "You—you can't mean this, Sir Roy."

"Mean it—I most certainly mean it," answered the Baronet, reading in the agitated face and manner of the young clergyman a verification of his suspicions.

"Neale Kenyon engaged to your daughter!" muttered Adrian Lyle stupidly. "It can't be. You—you ought to know——"

"What ought I to know?" demanded Sir Roy, sternly. "The boy was free to follow the dictates of his heart, and though my daughter might have made a far more ambitious marriage, yet I was well content that she should accept her cousin. Hers is an extremely difficult character to deal with, but he has known her from her childhood, and——"

A knock at the door interrupted him. A footman entered with letters. Sir Roy's eye caught the one on the top. He seized it eagerly.

"Why, it is from Neale," he cried. "Oh, my dear boy, this is delightful!" He tore open the flimsy envelope, and perused the few hurried lines. "He is well," he said below his breath. "Well, and—um—um—um. Why, what's this? 'No reason to keep my engagement to Alexis a secret any longer, unless she specially desires it.' There, what did I tell you? See, it's in his own handwriting; read for yourself."

Adrian Lyle drew back a step, as if to widen the distance between himself and his excited host.

"It is impossible," he repeated doggedly. "If I thought it——"

His eyes flashed; he drew himself up to his full height. At the same moment the door softly opened, and Alexis looked in.

"What is the matter?" she asked, as she hurriedly advanced and glanced from one to the other of the disturbed faces.

She had never seen Adrian Lyle look as he looked now.

Then her eyes fell on the letter in her father's hand. Her face paled a little.

"From Neale?" she questioned. "Is he safe?"

She took the little strip of paper and read it hurriedly and anxiously.

Then a slow wave of deepest crimson rose from cheek to brow. Involuntarily her eyes turned to Adrian Lyle.

"Miss Kenyon," he cried impulsively, "I only ask one word. Is this true? You are to be your cousin's wife?"

The colour faded slowly away. It was a very cold, defiant face that lifted itself to his.

There was strife going on in his soul. Clearly enough she read it. Had her hour come? Was this the triumph she had promised herself? Those grey eyes, dark with hidden fire, told a tale of passionate trouble: some sudden, intense emotion was vibrating within his heart. What could it be but the shock of what he had heard, what her father had foolishly betrayed? She felt a little thrill of fear, and almost of regret, as she looked back into those proud, indignant eyes.

Yet her sense of pleasure was keener than either the fear or the regret. A smile, cruel, cold—the smile he knew so well—just parted her lips. She answered simply:

"It is true."

It seemed to Adrian Lyle as if the room surged round him like a sea. The noise of a million waves beat in his brain, and made him deaf and dizzy. He wanted to be alone, to get away from these wondering faces; to think out clearly, rationally, what he should do, how he could avert this calamity.

Sir Roy looked at him with compassion.

"Poor fellow!" he thought, "so he, too, has singed his wings."

For how could he know this grief, and horror, and bitter, bitter wrath were for the sake of his nephew's dastard act and lasting dishonour? How could he tell that Adrian Lyle was looking down now at a bottomless gulf which seemed to yawn before the unconscious feet of an innocent and betrayed girl?

What he said; what he did; how he got out of that room, Adrian Lyle never knew.

But he was out, and the cool wind was blowing on his brow, and the wintry stars looking down on him through the leafless

avenue, before he seemed to recover the power of thought or realise what had happened.

"I must go to her," he kept saying over and over again. "If he has written; if he has told her this it will kill her, poor, lonely, forsaken child!"

He was in that state of feverish excitement when the limbs move without the consciousness of will. He noted nothing, saw nothing, felt nothing; only he heard again those cruel words which had at last sealed his oft-recurring doubts; only saw as in a dream the little cold smile which had meant Gretchen's doom.

Gradually terror and rage usurped the place of that unconscious stupor. The thought of Kenyon's baseness maddened him. All that was manly, and noble, and generous in his own soul cried shame on the cowardly weakness and selfishness that could make a woman's love the toy of an idle fancy; and regard the ruin of her future as lightly as the memory of his past.

Suddenly he lifted his face to the cold, clear sky. His eyes shone with a fierce light.

"If it be true," he cried aloud, "if it be true, he shall answer to me for his guilt. I swear it!"

GOETHE AND CARLYLE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THE next letter from Carlyle to Goethe is in the same month as that from the German, to which we have already referred, and it is remarkable in this respect that it betrays a touch of feminine Scotch "pawkiness." Thus in January, 1824, Carlyle writes:

"I am at present a candidate for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in our ancient Scottish University of Saint Andrews; a situation of considerable emolument and respectability, in which certain of my friends flatter me that I might be useful to myself and others. The Electors to the Office are the Principal and actual Professors of the college; who promise in this instance, contrary indeed to their too frequent practice, to be guided solely by grounds of a public sort; preferring that applicant who shall, by reference perhaps to his previous literary performances, or by testimonials from men of established note, approve himself the ablest. The qualifications required, or at least expected, are

not so much any profound scientific acquaintance with Philosophy, properly so-called, as a general character for intelligence, integrity, and literary attainment; all proofs of talent and spiritual worth of any kind, being more or less available. To the Electors personally, I am altogether a stranger. Of my fitness for this, or any other office, it is indeed little that I can expect you to know. Nevertheless, if you have traced in me any sense for what is True and Good, and any symptom, however faint, that I may realise in my own literary life some fraction of what I love and reverence in that of my Instructors, you will not hesitate to say so; and a word from you may go further than many words from another. There is also a second reason why I ask this favour of you; the wish to feel myself connected by still more and still kinder ties, with a man to whom I must reckon it among the pleasures of my existence, that I stand in any relation whatever. For the rest, let me assure you that good or ill success in this canvass is little likely to effect my equanimity unduly; I have studied and lived to little purpose, if I had not, at the age of two-and-thirty, learned in some degree, 'to seek for that consistency and sequence within myself, which external events will for ever refuse me.' I need only add, on this subject, that the form of such a document as I solicit is altogether unimportant; that of a general certificate or testimonial, not specially addressed at all being as common as any other."

Then having accomplished what he called the main purpose of his letter, Carlyle goes on to literary topics, and presses Goethe to continue and complete "Faust." The letter next partakes of a domestic interest, the "Otilie" referred to being Goethe's daughter-in-law before mentioned.

"My wife unites with me, as in all honest things, so in this, in warmest regards to you and yours. Nay, your Otilie is not unknown to her; with the sharp sight of female criticism she had already detected a lady's hand in the tasteful arrangement of that Packet, not yet understanding to whom it might be due. Will Otilie von Goethe accept the friendly and respectful compliments of Jane Welsh Carlyle, who hopes one day to know her better! For it is among our settled wishes, I might almost say projects, sometime to see Germany and its Art and Artists, and the man who, more than any other, has made it dear and honourable to

us. We even paint out to ourselves the too hollow day-dream of spending next winter, or, if this Election prosper, the summer which will follow it, in Weimar! Alas, that Space cannot be contracted, nor Time lengthened out, and so many must not meet, whose meeting would have been desired! Meanwhile we will continue hoping, and pray that, seen or unseen, all good may ever abide with you."

It was two months later before Goethe's "testimonial" came to hand—too late to be of use to Carlyle, who, however, had no chance of the Professorship in any case. The "testimonial" was more like a moral Essay of some length, but the following extract from it is of special interest:

"It may now without arrogance be asserted that German Literature has effected much for humanity in this respect, that a moral psychological tendency pervades it, introducing not ascetic timidity, but a free culture in accordance with Nature, and in cheerful obedience to law, and, therefore, I have observed with pleasure Mr. Carlyle's admirably profound study of this literature, and I have noticed with sympathy how he has not only been able to discover the beautiful and human, the good and great in us, but has also contributed what was his own, and has endowed us with the treasures of his genius. It must be granted that he has a clear judgment as to our Æsthetic and Ethic Writers, and, at the same time, his own way of looking at them, which proves that he rests on an original foundation and has the power to develop in himself the essentials of what is good and beautiful. In this sense I may well regard him as a man who would fill a Chair of Moral Philosophy, with single-heartedness, with purity, effect, and influence; enlightening the youth entrusted to him as to their real duties, in accordance with his disciplined thought, his natural gifts, and his acquired knowledge; aiming at leading and urging their minds to moral activity; and thereby steadily guiding them towards a religious completeness."

In acknowledging the letter with this splendid "testimonial," and a previous one in which Goethe had commented on an article in "The Edinburgh Review," on "The State of German Literature," which he had seen, and attributed to Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott's son-in-law, Carlyle writes, in April, 1828:

"And here I must not forbear to mention that Mr. Lockhart certainly did

not write that Essay on the 'State of German Literature,' in the 'Edinburgh Review'; as indeed he has never written aught in that journal, and could not well write aught, being Editor of the 'Quarterly Review,' a work directly opposed to it, and Organ of the Tory party, as that other is of the Whig or Liberal. If you have not already forgotten our dim notions on the 'State of German Literature,' it must gratify me much to say that they are in this instance due to myself. The Editor (Jeffrey) of the 'Edinburgh Review,' who himself wrote the critique on 'Wilhelm Meister,' and many years ago admitted a worthless enough paper on your 'Dichtung und Wahrheit,' is thought hereby to have virtually recanted his confession of faith with regard to German Literature; and great is the amazement and even consternation of many an 'old Stager,' over most of whom this man has long reigned with a soft, yet almost despotic sway. Let it not surprise you if I give one of your medals to him; for he also is a 'well-wisher,' as one good man must always be to another, however distance and want of right knowledge may, for a time, have warped his perceptions, and caused him to assume a cold or even unfriendly aspect. On the whole, our study and love of German Literature seem to be rapidly progressive: in my time, that is, within the last six years, I should almost say that the readers of your language have increased ten-fold; and with the readers the admirers; for with all minds of any endowment, these two titles, in the present state of matters, are synonymous. In proof of this, moreover, we can now refer not to one, but to two foreign journals, published in London, and eagerly, if not always wisely, looking towards Germany; the 'Foreign Quarterly Review,' and the 'Foreign Review,' with the last of which I, too, have formed some connection. Number one contained a sketch of your unhappy 'Zacharias Werner,' from my hands; and here since I began writing has number two arrived, with a long paper in it, from the same unworthy quarter, on the Interlude, 'Helena,' with the promise of a still longer one, by the next opportunity, on your works and character in general! Nor am I without hope that these criticisms, set forth with the best light and convictions I had, may meet with a certain tolerance from you. It is not altogether, yet it is in some degree, with mind as with matter in this respect; where the humblest pool, so it be at rest

within itself, may reflect faithfully the image even of the sun."

This brought a lengthy reply from Goethe in the following June, from which we take these passages :

"The translation of 'Wallenstein'" (by George Moir, of Edinburgh) "has made a quite peculiar impression upon me. During all the time that Schiller was at work upon it I never left his side, until at length, being perfectly familiar with the play, I, together with him, put it upon the stage, attended all rehearsals, and in doing so endured more vexation and chagrin than was reasonable, and then had to be present at the successive performances, in order to bring the difficult representation nearer and nearer to perfection. Thus it is easy to conceive that this masterly work could not but at length become to me trivial, nay, repulsive. And so I had not seen or read it for twenty years. And now that it unexpectedly comes before me again in Shakespeare's tongue, it reappears to me all at once, in all its parts, like a freshly-varnished picture, and I delight in it not only as of old, but also in a way quite peculiar. Say this, with my compliments, to the translator; also that the preface, which was written with the same completely sympathetic feeling, has given me much pleasure. And pray tell me his name, in order that he may stand out, from among the chorus of Philo-Germans, as a distinct individual.

"And here occurs to me a new observation, perhaps scarcely thought of, perhaps never before expressed : that the translator works not only for his own nation, but likewise for the one from whose language he has taken the work. For it happens, oftener than one is apt to suppose, that a nation sucks out the sap and strength of a work, and absorbs it into its own inner life, so as to have no further pleasure in it, and to draw no more nourishment from it. This is especially the case with the German people, who consume far too quickly whatever is offered them, and, while transforming it by various re-workings, they in a sense annihilate it. Therefore it is very salutary, if what was their own should, after a time, by means of a successful translation, reappear to them endowed with fresh life."

This is an allusion to a dream or scheme of a Universal or International Literature, with regard to which much more occurs in Goethe's letters. But in a continuation of this letter we read :

"Ottolie sends most cordial greetings to Mrs. Carlyle ; she and her sister have begun a piece of embroidery which should have gone with this despatch. This friendly work, interrupted by necessary journeys to some Baths, and now by the saddest event" (death of the Grand Duke) "will, I hope, come to her, though later, in graceful completeness.

"I add to the third Section of my Works the last number of 'Kunst und Alterthum.' You will see from it that we Germans are likewise occupying ourselves with foreign literature. By mail-coaches and steam-packets, as well as by daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals, the nations are drawing nearer to one another, and I shall, so long as it is permitted me, have to turn my attention to this mutual exchange also. On this point, however, we may yet have many things to say. Your labours come in good time to us ; for ours, too, quicker means of conveyance are prepared. Let us make use of this open intercourse more and more freely ; specially to you. Soon give me a clear idea of your present abode. I find Dumfries a little above the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, on the River Nith, near its mouth. Do you live in this town, or in its neighbourhood ? and how do you get my packages ? Since you are situated near the western coast, probably still through Leith, and then by land ? But however it may be, let me soon hear from you in reply to this letter. Greet your dear wife from me. This time I am at least sending some pieces of Music for her."

Carlyle had by this time removed to Craigenputtock, and hence Goethe's geographical and topographical queries. In the following September, Carlyle acknowledges receipt of the letter and presents, and then goes on to say :

"Doubtless it does seem wonderful to us that you and yours, occupied with so many great concerns in which the whole world is interested, should find any time to take thought of us who live so far out of your sphere, and can have so little influence, reciprocally, on aught that pertains to you. But such is the nature, is this strangely complicated universe, that all men are linked together, and the greatest will come into connection with the least. Neither, though it is a fine tie, do I reckon it a weak one, that unites me to you. When I look back on my past life, it seems as if you, a man of foreign speech, whom I have never seen, and, alas ! shall perhaps never

see, had been my chief Benefactor ; nay I may say the only real Benefactor I ever met with ; inasmuch as wisdom is the only real good, the only blessing which cannot be perverted, which blesses both him that gives and him that takes. In trying bereavements, when old friends are snatched away from you, it must be a consolation to think that neither in this age, nor in any other, can you ever be left alone ; but that wherever men seek Truth, spiritual Clearness, and Beauty, there you have brothers and children. I pray Heaven that you may long, long be spared to see good and do good in this world : without you, existing literature, even that of Germany, so far as I can discern it, were but a poor matter ; and without one man, whom other men might judge clearly and yet view with any true reverence. Nevertheless the good seed that is sown cannot be trodden down, or altogether choked with tares ; and surely it is the highest of all privileges to sow this seed, to have sown it : nay, it is privilege enough if we have hands to reap it, and eyes to see it growing !”

Then after referring to the distribution of the ever-recurring medals, and other matters, he goes on :

“The only thing of any moment I have written since I came hither, is an essay on Burns, for the next number of the ‘Edinburgh Review,’ which, I suppose, will be published in a few weeks. Perhaps you have never heard of this Burns, and yet he was a man of the most decisive genius ; but born in the rank of a Peasant, and miserably wasted away by the complexities of his strange situation ; so that all he effected was comparatively a trifle, and he died before middle age. We English, especially we Scotch, love Burns more than any other Poet we have had for centuries. It has often struck me to remark, that he was born a few months only before Schiller, in the year 1759 ; and that neither of these two men, of whom I reckon Burns, perhaps naturally, even the greater, ever heard the other’s name ; but that they shone as stars in opposite hemispheres, the little atmosphere of the Earth intercepting their mutual light.”

After these pregnant sentences, we come upon personal matter again.

“You enquire with such affection touching our present abode and employments, that I must say some words on that subject, while I have still space. Dumfries is a pretty town of some fifteen thousand inhabitants ; the Commercial and Judicial

Metropolis of a considerable district on the Scottish Border. Our dwelling-place is not in it, but fifteen miles (two hours’ riding) to the north-west of it, among the Granite Mountains and black moors which stretch westward through Galloway almost to the Irish Sea. This is, as it were, a green oasis in that desert of heath and rocks ; a piece of ploughed and partially sheltered and ornamented ground, where corn ripens and trees yield umbrage, though encircled on all hands by moor-fowl and only the hardiest breeds of sheep. Here by dint of great endeavour we have pargetted and garnished for ourselves a clean substantial dwelling ; and settled down in defect of any Professional or other Official appointment, to cultivate Literature, on our own resources, by way of occupation, and roses and garden shrubs, and, if possible, health and a peaceable temper of mind to forward it. The roses are indeed still mostly to plant ; but they already blossom in Hope ; and we have two swift horses, which, with the mountain air, are better than all physicians for sick nerves. That exercise, which I am very fond of, is almost my sole amusement ; for this is one of the most solitary spots in Britain, being six miles from any individual of the formally visiting class. It might have suited Rousseau almost as well as his island of St. Pierre ; indeed, I find that most of my city friends impute to me a motive similar to his in coming hither, and predict no good from it. But I came hither purely for this one reason : that I might not have to write for bread, might not be tempted to tell lies for money.”

Here, indeed, is the true Carlylese touch ; he went into the wilderness that he might not be tempted to tell (write) lies for money ! Passing on a little, we find the following from Goethe, dated the sixth of July, 1829 :

“If this present letter should reach you before the 28th of August, I beg you, on that date, quietly to keep my eightieth birthday, and earnestly to wish for me that in the days which may still be granted to me, a measure of strength may be given in proportion. I pray you also to give me news from time to time as to how you are situated and as to your work. At the bottom of the little box there is lying a gift sent by the ladies of my family, with the friendliest feelings. The wall-ornament (called in French a *semainière*) is to remind you pleasantly of us every day of the week, and, indeed, at many an hour of

the day. Contentedly enjoy the composure and consistency which have been granted to you; my life, though indeed there is little outward agitation in it, must appear, if a vision of it should ever cross your mind, a veritable witches' circle of tumult in comparison."

Some verses accompany the little presents, and in Carlyle's reply (dated Craigenputtock, the third of November, 1829), is the following passage:

"Six years ago I should have reckoned the possibility of a Letter, of a Present from Goethe to me, little less wondrous and dreamlike than from Shakespeare or Homer. Yet so it is: the man to whom I owe more than to any other—namely, some measure of spiritual Light and Freedom—is no longer a mere 'airy tongue' to me, but a living Man, with feelings which, in many kindest ways, reply and correspond to my own! Let me pray only that it may long continue; and if the Scholar cannot meet with his Teacher, face to face, in this world, may some higher perennial meeting, amid inconceivable environments, be appointed them in another!"

And later in the same epistle:

"In regard to my employments and manner of existence, literary and economic, I must not speak here. I am still but an Essayist, and longing more than ever to be a Writer in a far better sense. Meanwhile, I do what I may; and cannot complain of wanting audience, stolid as many of my little critics are and must be. I have written on Voltaire, on Novalis, and was this day correcting proof-sheets of a paper on Jean Paul, for the 'Foreign Review.' I have some thoughts of writing a separate book on Luther, but whether this winter or not is undecided. I delayed three weeks writing this Letter, till a proposal (from some London booksellers) of my composing what they call a 'History of German Literature,' were either finally agreed upon or finally abandoned; but as yet neither of the two has happened."

A second letter is despatched from Craigenputtock, just before Christmas, with a packet of return presents, where we read:

"The portfolio is of my wife's manufacture, who sends you, among other love tokens, a lock of her hair; concerning which I am to say that, except to her Husband she never did the like to any man. She begs, however, and hopes, that you will send her, in return, a lock of your hair: which she will keep among her

most precious possessions, and only leave, as a rich legacy to the worthiest that comes after her. For a heart that honestly loves you, I too hope that you will do so much."

There was also a Scotch bonnet for Otilie, to which was affixed this not very poetical verse by Mrs. Carlyle, 'all out of her own head,' as the children say.

Scotland prides her in the "Bonnet Blue,"
That it brooks no stain in Love or War;
Be it, on Otilie's head, a token true
Of my Scottish love to kind Weimar!

In Carlyle's accompanying letter occurs the following passage:

"For the present you are to figure your two Scottish friends as embosomed amid snow and 'thick-ribbed ice;' yet secured against grim winter by the glow of bright fires; and often near you in imagination; nay, often thinking the very thoughts that were once yours, for a little red volume is seldom absent from our parlour. By-and-by, we still trust to hear that all is well with you: the arrival of a Weimar letter ever makes a day of jubilee here. May all good be with you and yours!"

The request for a lock of Goethe's hair was an unfortunate one. It brings forth a grim, quaint reply from the old man:

"As to its contents" (i.e. of the box), "I will mention first the incomparable lock of hair, which one would indeed have liked to see along with the dear head, but which, when it came to light by itself here, almost alarmed me. The contrast was too striking, for I did not need to touch my skull to become aware that only stubble was left there, nor was it necessary for me to go to the looking-glass to learn that a long flight of time had given it a discoloured look. The impossibility of making the desired return smote my heart, and forced thoughts upon me which one usually prefers to banish. In the end, however, nothing remained for me but to content myself with the reflection that such a gift was to be most thankfully received without hope of any adequate requital. For the rest it shall be kept secret in the portfolio that is worthy of it, and only the most cherished objects shall bear it company. The elegant Scotch Bonnet, I can assure you, has given much pleasure. For many years we have been visited by inhabitants of the Three Kingdoms, who like to remain with us for a time, and enjoy good society. Among these, indeed, there are comparatively few Scotchmen; yet there cannot fail to be preserved in some fair heart here so lively

an image of one of your countrymen that she must regard the splendid national head-dress, including the thistle, as a most pleasing ornament; and the kind donor would certainly be delighted to see the most charming face in the world peering out from beneath it. Otilie sends her most grateful thanks, and will not fail, as soon as our days of mourning are over, to make a glorious appearance in it."

In a subsequent letter another allusion is made by Goethe to the hair question:

"A peerless lock of black hair impels me to add a little sheet, and with true regret to remark that the desired return is, alas! impossible. Short and discoloured and devoid of all charm, old age must be content if any flowers at all will still blossom in the inner man when the outward bloom has vanished. I am already seeking for some substitute, but have not yet been lucky enough to find one. My warmest greetings to your esteemed wife."

In May, 1830, Carlyle writes:

"Happy it is, meanwhile, that whether we ever meet in the body or not, we have already met you in spirit, which union can never be parted, or made of no effect. Here in our Mountain Solitude, you are often an inmate with us; and can whisper wise lessons and pleasant tales in the ear of the Lady herself. She spends many an evening with you, and has done all winter, greatly to her satisfaction. One of her last performances was the 'Deutschen Ausgewanderten,' and that glorious 'Mährchen,' a true Universe of Imagination; in regard to the manifold, inexhaustible significance of which (for the female eye guessed a significance under it). I was oftener applied to for exposition than I could give it; and at last, to quiet importunities, was obliged to promise that I would some day write a commentary on it, as on one of the deepest, most poetical things even Goethe had ever written. Nay, looking abroad, I can further reflect with pleasure that thousands of my countrymen, who had need enough of such an acquaintance, are now also beginning to know you: of late years, the voice of Dulness, which was once loud enough on this matter, has been growing feebler and feebler; so that now, so far as I hear, it is altogether silent, and quite a new tone has succeeded it. On the whole, Britain and Germany will not always remain strangers; but rather, like two Sisters that have been

long divided by distance and evil tongues, will meet lovingly together, and find that they are near of Kin."

Some further correspondence ensued with regard to Carlyle's proposed "History of German Literature," and the publication in Germany of a translation of his "Life of Schiller," with an Introduction by Goethe, and a frontispiece view of the house at Craigenputtock. At the end of a letter of Carlyle's, dated 15th November, 1830, is the following postscript by his wife:

"I have requested a vacant corner of my Husband's sheet, that I might, in my own person, add a word of acknowledgement. But what my heart feels towards you finds no fit utterance in words; and seeks some modes of expression that were infinite; in action, rather in high endeavour, would my love, my faith, my deep sense of your goodness express itself; and then only, should these feelings become worthy of their exalted object. Goethe's 'friend,' 'dear friend,' words more delightful than great Queen so named. 'I bear a charmed heart'; the fairy-like gift on which those words are written shall be my talisman to destroy unworthy influences. Judge, then, how I must value it! In the most secret place of my house, I scarcely think it sufficiently safe; where I look at it from time to time with a mingled feeling of pride and reverence. Accept my heartfelt thanks for this and so many other tokens of your kindness; and still think of me as your affectionate friend and faithful disciple,

"JANE W. CARLYLE"

It was in the following year, in August, 1831, that occurred that historic incident, of which readers of Lewes's "Life of Goethe" will have some recollection. "Fifteen Englishmen" combined to send the aged Poet a present of a gold seal on his birthday. These "fifteen Englishmen" were not exactly as given by Lewes, but were, we believe, Thomas Carlyle, his brother Dr. Carlyle, Frazer (editor of the "Foreign Review"), Maginn, Herand (editor of "Fraser's Magazine"), G. Moir, Churchill, Jordan (of the "Literary Gazette"), Professor Wilson, Sir Walter Scott, Lockhart, Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, Southey, Wordsworth, and Barry Cornwall. The design of the seal is said to have been sketched by Mrs. Carlyle, and represented the serpent of eternity encircling a star, with the words "Ohne

Hast, ohne Rast," in allusion to Goethe's verses,

Wie das Gestirn
Ohne Hast
Aber ohne Rast
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

(Like a Star, unhalting, unceasing, be each one fulfilling his God-given best.)

The following letter accompanied the gift:—

"Fifteen English Friends to Goethe, on the 28th August, 1831.

"SIR,—Among the friends whom this so interesting anniversary calls round you, may we 'English Friends,' in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present ourselves, to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift; which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value. We said to ourselves: as it is always the highest duty and pleasure to show reverence to whom reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor is he who by act and word, instructs us in wisdom, so we undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually-taught towards their spiritual teachers, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common. For which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching Birthday; that so, while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting. And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties! We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious—that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, 'like a star, without haste, yet without rest.'

"We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

"FIFTEEN ENGLISH FRIENDS."

It is not difficult to see Carlyle's handiwork in the composition of this letter, the receipt of which and the accompanying present was, as Lewes tells us, "extremely gratifying" to Goethe. It was in reference to it that his last letter was written to Carlyle, which we give in full:

"To the Fifteen English Friends.

"The words the Poet speak swiftly and surely work within the compass of his land and home; yet knows he not if they do work afar. Britons, ye have understood! 'The active mind, the deed restrained: steadfast striving, without haste.' And thus you will that it be sealed."

"The above I sent through Mr. Fraser, of London, for the associated friends immediately after receiving their most charming gift. To you, my dearest sir, I send this duplicate, which will perhaps reach you before that missive comes thence to you. I now merely add that I have already read here and there in the books and pamphlets which accompanied the gift, and that I find in them much that is delightful. Of this more next time, as well as of the silhouettes and the inconceivable way in which they bring the absent before one.

"The box, sent from Hamburg, through Messrs. Parish, at the end of June, is ere now, or will soon be, in your hands; let me have a word from you concerning it.

"I now repeat here, but in the fewest words: the gift of the associated friends has afforded me a pleasure as unusual as unexpected; and not me alone, but likewise friends and acquaintances, who know how to appreciate so artistic a piece of work.

"To the dear Pair, happy hours!

"GOETHE."

The "next time" never arrived. Goethe died on the twenty-second of March, 1832, and we end these notes with an extract from Carlyle's journal, written under a newspaper cutting, announcing Goethe's death:

"Craigenputtock, 19th April, 1832.

"This came to me at Dumfries on my first return thither. I had written to Weimar, asking for a letter to welcome me home" (after a long stay in London); "and this was it. My letter would never reach its address: the great and good friend was no longer there; had departed some seven days before."

CHRONICLES OF THE WELSH COUNTIES.

DENBIGH AND FLINT.

THE ancient kingdom of Gwynedd, or North Wales, one of the three divisions of the land of the Cymry, as bequeathed by Roderick the Great to his three sons—if

we may credit Welsh tradition—was itself divided into four districts. Three of these, Mon, Arfon, and Meirion, represent the three counties already treated of, that is, Anglesey, Caernarvon, and Merioneth. The fourth district was known as Y Perfeddwlad, and embraced nearly all Denbigh and Flint.

At some time or other, no doubt the Kingdom was rounded off by considerable tracts of Cheshire and Shropshire, and then the name of this particular district, which signifies the Central Region in the vernacular, was appropriate enough. But in historical times, it is rather the border country, the debateable land where the Cymry fiercely strove for their own; often victorious in war, but losing every advantage through the dissensions and jealousies of their chiefs.

Creeping along the level shores of Flintshire, the Saxons established settlements and posts along that fertile tract. Always the great stronghold of Rhuddlan was the chief point of attack and defence, for here was the vulnerable point in the cuirass of rock and mountain. The possession of Rhuddlan gave to the invaders the rich Vale of Clwyd, with its flocks and herds, and opened the way to the very heart of North Wales.

At Rhuddlan was fought the great decisive battle between the Saxons under King Offa, and the confederated Welsh, A.D. 795; and the plaintive Welsh air, "Morfa Rhuddlan," commemorates, it is said, the loss and defeat of that day of slaughter. From Rhuddlan, Harold carried fire and sword among the peaceful Welsh valleys; peaceful as a hive of bees is peaceful, but as ready with a fierce swarm to repel an invader, or issue forth for booty or revenge.

The Normans, with more scientific persistence, built the strong castle whose red sandstone walls still frown over the marsh. The old Earls of Chester held the castle and all the country round by the sword; a sword that was rarely sheathed from one generation to another, for, times out of mind, the hardy Welshmen came against the alien possessors of their ancient stronghold. Edward the First, in his plan for the conquest of Wales, had his chief place of arms and the head-quarters of his power at Rhuddlan; here he summoned his Council, and hence he issued those statutes of Rhuddlan which were intended to conciliate and pacify his new subjects. For, in these statutes he confirmed all the ancient laws

and privileges of the Welsh, with two exceptions, as to the inheritance of land. The Welsh laws excluded females from the succession, while they admitted illegitimate offspring in failure of other descendants, to share the paternal inheritance. On both these heads the King was firm to abrogate the ancient practices, and we may reasonably conjecture that female influence, in the person of his devoted wife, was at hand to strengthen the King's resolve.

Above Rhuddlan opens out the rich vale of the River Clwyd,

With slow music gliding
By pastoral hills, old woods, and ruined towers,

with St. Asaph standing at the entrance just above the junction of the rivers Elwy and Clwyd. According to tradition, the first religious settlements at St. Asaph, or Llanelwy, was founded by Cyndeyrw, otherwise Kentigern, Bishop of Glasgow and Primate of Scotland, somewhere about King Arthur's time. Here, at all events, was established a monastery of the Celtic type, whose Pab, or Abbot, ruled over its extensive ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and one of the earliest of these Abbots was St. Assa, under whose invocation the principal church of the community was founded. The Bishopric was an innovation of later times. The Cathedral is but a homely edifice, to be matched by many an English parish church.

Higher up the river we come to Denbigh, a pleasant modern town, with the remains of a fine old feudal castle crowning the height above. Traces of the old walls of the town, built by its Norman possessors, are to be found on the declivity; but the existing town has found a more convenient site upon the plain below. An ancient Welsh fortress was here, where the unhappy Prince, David, mustered his countrymen for a final struggle against the King of England. The existing castle was built by Henry Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, whose effigy, "in his stateley long robes," still appears above the massive gateway. The castle well, which is sometimes called the Goblin well, is still the freshest and best in the neighbourhood, and has never been known to fail even when all other wells in the district were dried up by successive drought. According to Leland, "Sum say the Erle of Lincoln's son felle into the Castle well and there dyed; wheraupon he never passid to finish the Castle."

If this last catastrophe really occurred there would have been voices to say that here was a judgement of Heaven upon the

spoiler and oppressor. For a legend is in existence which has some show of probability, and which, at all events, illustrates the general opinion as to how the English Lords acquired their lands in Wales. Some time during the reign of Edward the First died Griffith ap Madoc, one of the great chiefs of North Wales, Lord of Broomfield and Yale, Chirk and Nantheudwy, leaving two infant sons, Madoc and Llewellyn, to the care of his widow Emma. The widow, quarrelling with her late husband's kinsmen, delivered her two sons to the charge of King Edward, who assigned them in wardships, according to the custom of the time, to two of his great nobles. Madoc was given to John, Earl of Warren, and Llewellyn to Roger Mortimer, of the Wigmore family, to be brought up to the use of arms and the knowledge of all knightly accomplishments befitting their station. Ere they reached man's estate the two youths were drowned together in the River Dee. Tradition points out the exact spot.

The little town of Holt, on the Denbighshire side of the River Dee, is connected with the neighbouring village of Farndon, on the Cheshire side, by a narrow many-arched bridge, one of the most ancient in the Kingdom. One of the arches of this bridge is still known as the Lady's Arch, and tradition connects it with the wicked Emma, the unnatural mother of the two noble children of Wales. For beneath one of the arches of Holt Bridge the two boys were drowned, as report had it, by the contrivance of their mother and with the connivance of the two English Lords. The bridge was long haunted by the spirits of these hapless youths, known in the folk-lore of the neighbourhood as the two fairies.

If the English Lords had no hand in the death of the boys, anyhow they received the benefit of their dying, as did the Earl of Lincoln, whom tradition, however, does not credit with a knowledge of the deed. These powerful nobles, under a grant from the King of England, divided among them the rich Lordships of their wards, saving only the Castle of Hope, which was reserved to the Crown. De Warren built a noble castle at Holt, of which hardly one stone remains upon another, and the De Warrens, once so powerful, speedily died out, and became extinct. The Mortimers had no happy fate, it will be remembered; and the judgement of Heaven upon the Earl of Lincoln, the least guilty of the three, has already been recorded. Such, at all

events, is the moral drawn by this old-world story, and if not true, it is indeed "ben trovato."

To return to Denbigh and its castle, which made some figure in the Wars of the Roses, and fell eventually to a notable possessor, no other than Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth. The Earl of Leicester seems to have had it in his mind to raise a lordly dwelling here, and laid the foundations of a big church in the valley, whose unfinished walls are still to be seen. Dudley was cordially detested by the Welsh, who were less impressed with the magnificence of his surroundings than by the exactions he attempted to levy upon his tenants; and the Earl, disgusted by the incivility of the inhabitants, abandoned the place as a residence. The Welsh have always been noted for their plain speaking and for an independence of bearing which contrasts not a little with the subservience to rank and position of their Saxon neighbours. Even at the present day a small Welsh farmer, whose house is a hovel and whose garments are patched till the original stuff is unrecognisable, will address his squire, or the Queen, or even Sir Watkin—and even if there were a greater potentate in the world it would be all the same—with all the freedom and ease of an equal.

Poor King Charles, who came here in his doleful wanderings from Chester when his cause was broken and lost, said that he never had such a talking to in his life as he got at Denbigh, and during the three nights he stayed at the castle as the guest of its loyal Governor, Salusbury, heard more home-truths than during his whole reign previously. The castle, however, held out staunchly for the King, and surrendered at last to General Mytton, whose mission it seems to have been to capture all the castles in North Wales. This Mytton we have heard of before, by the way, in connection with Shrewsbury in the Chronicles of Shropshire.

The Salusburies, as well as being, it seems, hereditary custodians of Denbigh Castle, were also the greatest people of the neighbourhood—of the second rank, that is, below the great hereditary nobles—and although of English origin, they had been settled in Wales since the days of Henry the Fourth, and indeed enjoyed some of the confiscated estates of Owen Glendwr. It was one Sir John Salusbury who had the distinction of being the first husband of Catherine Tudor, or Catherine

Beram, as she was called from her estate, who flourished in the reign of Elizabeth. Sir John presently was gathered to his fathers, leaving Catherine a young widow, plump and well endowed. Two of her neighbours, Sir Richard Clough and Maurice Wynn of Gwydir, were known to have cast eyes of affection upon the fair Catherine—all in the way of honour, and strictly with an eye to the future—and Maurice, the younger and handsomer of the pair, determined not to lose the prize by undue delay. The rivals attended the funeral of their late friend, and Maurice secured the privilege of escorting the bereaved one on her way home. Excusing any want of decorum on the ground of his ardent passion, he put the question to her plain and plump; would she marry him? The widow blushing replied that she was not insensible to his merits, and he might have hoped for a favourable reply, but alas! Sir Richard Clough had put the same question on the way to the funeral, and she had given her promise to him. Still, and here the widow repeated the substance of the old adage, that everything comes to him who knows how to wait. Whether it is the same thing for which one begins waiting may be doubted, but in effect Maurice was content to wait, and became in good time Catherine's third husband. She buried him too, and took a fourth husband, who had the melancholy satisfaction of burying her with all honours. Having been a fruitful wife to the most part of her husbands, she became the ancestress of numerous descendants, and her name appears in a variety of Welsh pedigrees, so that she was known as Mam Cymru, or the Mother of Wales.

The second husband of this notable woman, Sir Richard Clough, was himself a man of some mark. He had no ancient Welsh blood to recommend him, but was born of humble parentage at Denbigh, descended probably from some stalwart military settler from Lancashire—some Hugh or Will o' the Clough. He sought and found fortune in London, and became the partner of Thomas Gresham, and with him helped to found the Royal Exchange of that great city. He had plans for turning the great stream of commerce into his native district; and building a house for himself, he furnished it with warehouses and store-rooms, fit for carrying on a merchant's business. This house and the estate about it eventually descended to

Henry Thrale the brewer, and became the residence of his widow, Mrs. Piozzi, and thus the frequent abiding place of Dr. Johnson. The widow named the place Brynbella, but its original name was Bachygraig.

Of the same mixed race, in which Saxon doggedness is blended with the fire and imagination of the Welsh, were the Myddletons of Gwaenynog. The old parish church of Denbigh, which is known as Whitechurch, and is situated several miles from the town, contains a monumental brass, to the memory of Richard Myddleton, Governor of Denbigh Castle, with his wife, his nine sons, and seven daughters all kneeling about him. One of these kneeling figures represents Sir Hugh Myddleton, the worthy knight who first brought an abundant supply of water to London by means of the New River. Another, Thomas, became Lord Mayor of London, and accumulated a large fortune, eventually distributed by heiresses among many noble families. A third son, William, was a naval captain, and a poet of some renown in his day.

The riches indeed of the Vale of Clwyd are spread thickly about the walls of old Denbigh Castle. Its beauties are perhaps most to be appreciated by the men from the hills, to whom the contrast from their own rugged wilds appeals with great force. Thus old Churchward, who in his "Worthiness of Wales," rarely rises above a somewhat prosaic level, at the sight of the vale rises to something like the inspiration of Chaucer :

The noise of streames in summer morning clear,
The chirpe and charme and chaunts of every bird
That passeth there, a second heaven is.

It is no difficult transit from the Vale of Clwyd to that of the Dee; the Denbigh and Corwen railway makes the passage, without meeting any difficulties in the way of mountain barriers, passing Ruthin on the way, the old seat of the de Greys. And the Dee leads us to Llangollen, about whose very name there is a charm, the sweet vale with its Abbey of Valle Crucis and its mystic castle of Dinas Bran frowning from its rugged height. But it would hardly repay us to follow the winding course of the Dee, as it flows placidly in its lower course through a country rather English than Welsh in character. There is Bangor Iscoed indeed on the way, the great monastery of the Welsh Kingdom, whose monks were slaughtered by a King of Northumbria so long ago, that the

venerable Bede is able to record it in his Ecclesiastical History; so long ago that all traces of monastery, churches, cells, have disappeared beneath the soil. Then there is Holt, with its old bridge already alluded to, and beyond, the river finds its way through English ground to Chester.

Taking the more direct way to ancient Chester, we pass Ruabon, a great coal-mining district—where the pleasant, abrupt scenery of the old red sand-stone is almost effaced by the smoke of collieries and factories—and then arrive at Wrexham. Hereabouts Wales seems to have expanded since the days of the Heptarchy, to have crossed Offa's Dyke, and taken possession of the country beyond. The origin of Wrexham indeed is a puzzle; the Saxons called it Wrightesham. But who were the Wrights? They were iron and steel wrights apparently, for Wrexham was noted for its armour-smiths down to the time when armour ceased to be worn. But these Wrights were not Saxons, it is evident, nor were they probably Welsh. We may guess that they were refugees from the burnt and plundered city of Uriconium. Boilers have superseded bucklers, and still Wrexham has a mechanical turn; it is the workshop of Wales as of old, and its rich church and ornate tower testify to the wealth which rewarded its labours in other days, while its busy streets and neat public buildings are a sign of its present prosperity. The church tower of Wrexham is one of the Seven Wonders of Wales, according to the somewhat puerile conceit of the age which invented the Seven Champions of Christendom and other marvels. A second wonder was the ring of bells of Gresford, whose sweet chimes may still be heard as we pursue the way towards Chester. Some famous cross of old times, a Calvary installed upon the meeting of the roads, got the name in Welsh of Croesyrfordd, or the Cross of the Highways, and this was turned by Saxon tongues into Gresford.

Hereabouts is Wynnstay, which used to be Wattstay, or Wattstowe, perhaps, for Watt's Dyke runs through the great park; the dyke being an entrenchment of unknown antiquity, which runs in a parallel direction with the dyke known as Offa's; the space between the two having been once, it is said, neutral ground, where Welsh and English met and trafficked. Beyond Gresford there is a sudden break, the final edge of the wild hill-country and the fertile plain of Cheshire stretches

before us, a wide grassy ocean, of which this is the shore.

Further inland, crossing by lonely roads among the hills, and following in the main the old Roman track, we may reach Hope, which was once Queen Hope, a name that carries a story with it. For here was Queen Eleanor's own castle, and here she rested for a night on her way to Caernarvon, to give birth to England's hope; a hope much falsified by the event.

Then we pass Mold, a considerable mining town, with Maer-y-Garmon in the vicinity, the site of a battle won by the Britons over the Picts and Scots, a victory due to St. Germanus and his ghostly arts; and still following the Roman Way, which can be traced at intervals, we reach Caerwys, an ancient seat of early Welsh jurisdiction, and the last place where a National Eisteddfod (a gathering of the bards) was held, summoned by royal writ. This was in the reign of Elizabeth, after which time the old bardic usage seems to have fallen into disuse, till revived in modern days. Here we are close upon St. Asaph again, and, turning towards the coast, we may reach the pleasant little town of Holywell, with its legends of St. Winifred and her miraculous recovery from decapitation. At all events, here is the holy well itself, the most powerful spring in Britain, from which flows a considerable stream, that suffers little diminution even in the heats of a droughty summer.

In the neighbourhood is Mostyn Hall, the seat of the Mostyns of that ilk, an ancient and famous mansion, that once gave shelter to Henry Tudor, the future King, and where he had a narrow escape from Richard Crookback's men. The Mostyns are of the ancient royal blood of Wales, and long despised the Saxon surname, carrying their pedigree tacked on to their Christian names, like the tail of a kite.

It was some Lord President of the Marches, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, who, weary of the long string of "aps" on the records of the Court, ordered that all those should be cut off, and that a man's Christian name, and the title of his residence, should alone be regarded. And thus, whenever a man came before the law courts, he received a surname: a kind of petrification, which might stick to his children also. But more fortunate people, who lived after the manner of their fathers and avoided the courts of law, continued to style themselves John ap William ap Richard, and

so on, even to far within the present century.

Coasting the estuary of the Dee—a terribly dull performance, to be got over as quickly as possible—we come to Flint, with the round squat towers of its castle jutting over the wide unwholesome flats. The castle has an interest as we recall Shakespeare's account of the surrender of Richard the Second within its walls. But in reality the King was already a prisoner when he was brought within the walls of the Castle. Percy had met the King at Conway, and persuaded him to proceed towards Flint, to meet the Duke of Lancaster, and arrange with him as to the summoning of a Parliament and the restoration of the Duke's forfeited estates.

On the way, near Penmaer Rhos, the King perceived a numerous band in waiting in the pass who bore the Percy cognizance on their pennons. He would have turned rein and fled, but Percy seized his bridle, and the King, seeing the uselessness of resistance, suffered himself to be led captive towards Flint.

Between Flint and Chester, not far from the borders of the two counties, lies Hawarden Castle, once a notable link in the lines of fortresses originally designed to hold the Welsh in check, and to keep open a route for invading their country. For these purposes it seems to have been held as a Saxon post, and the castle was subsequently held by a Norman, by tenure of seneschalship under the Earl of Chester. Singularly enough the castle was once occupied by the great Simon of Montfort, who here held a conference with Llewellyn, Prince of Wales. Simon, who had views far in advance of his age, proposed to live in friendship with the Welsh, to restore to that people those forts and ports which were held by the English within the borders of Wales. But the rule of right and justice which Simon sought to establish was not yet to prevail. Force and ferocity were soon re-established in power, and one of the earliest consequences of renewed warfare between Welsh and English fell upon Hawarden itself.

In 1281 David, the brother of the last Llewellyn, stormed the castle and put the garrison to the sword. This was one of the crimes held to justify his subsequent cruel execution, although, as an act of war, it might have been justified by the practice of the time. But David had unfortunately, in former days, accepted a Lordship

at the hands of the King, and it was as a revolted Baron, and not as a Welsh Prince, that he was tried and condemned.

The castle subsequently passed through many hands. It was Lord Derby's at the time of the Worcester fight, and on its subsequent sequestration it was purchased by Serjeant Glynne, a noted lawyer, of the Commonwealth period.

Did not the learned Glynne and Maynard
To make good subjects traitors, strain hard?

is written in Hudibras. With the Glynnes the castle remained till our own times; and not only the estate, but also the Rectory of Hawarden, perhaps the richest living in England, with a curious exempted jurisdiction and the ancient right of granting matrimonial licenses, registering wills, giving probate, and performing all the acts of a suffragan except ordination; in fact, the estate of a Bishop, and with almost a Bishop's revenue to support it.

If this account of the two counties has wandered in and out without much regard to their respective boundaries, blame the statute of Henry the Eighth, which formed them out of the March lands without much regard to topographical considerations. Flint, indeed, has always been an anomalous kind of county, and for long after the Conquest, was considered as part of Cheshire, while Denbigh, taking the name of its chief stronghold, is rather a political than a natural division. But with the two counties thus linked together, and these inadequate chronicles of North Wales. Powysland, and Dyved, or South Wales, now alone remain to be considered.

CRIMINAL AND LEGAL CURIOSITIES.

A LARGE amount of interest and a vast number of curious incidents will repay those who have the patience to wade through the records of the Courts. Some are intensely tragic; and others are extremely humorous; while others show how cases have oftentimes been decided by the light of ordinary common sense rather than by the legal acumen on either side. Two cases occurred in 1879 in the Sussex County Court. A servant sued her mistress for a month's wages in lieu of notice, and the question was raised whether the plaintiff had not failed to fulfil her duty in refusing to renounce a bath, which was alleged, on her part, to be too heavy for her to lift. The learned Judge, Mr. A. Martineau, ad-

journed the case for the production of the bath, and a few days later it was brought to the County Court. At the request of the Judge, the High Bailiff filled it with water and tried his strength with it. On coming into Court he said he was of opinion that the bath was too heavy for the servant to lift, and His Honour gave a verdict for the amount claimed, with costs. On a subsequent occasion, the same Judge settled a case by equally direct proof. The question was whether a supply of potatoes was equal to sample. The Judge directed three to be cooked in Court. The specimens were pronounced excellent, and a verdict returned for the plaintiff.

Very different was the sense displayed in the following case. A man was charged with stealing a piece of bacon from the prosecutor's shop. The prosecutor swore that he was sitting in his parlour behind the shop, when he saw the prisoner enter the latter, take up the bacon, and put it in his pocket; that as he was leaving the shop he rushed out after him and accused him of the theft, and gave him in charge of a policeman who happened to be passing at the time. As the policeman found the bacon in the pocket of the accused, a person of even only ordinary intellect would have thought that here, at least, was a clear case of larceny. But the jury in this case did not consist of men of ordinary intellects.

The prisoner asked the prosecutor two questions:

"Was there a window through which you saw me come into the shop and take the bacon?"

"Yea."

"Was it closed?"

"Yea."

"Then," said the culprit triumphantly to the Judge, "the whole thing falls through, my Lord; he can't swear through glass."

The Judge, in summing up, told the jury that if they believed the evidence, they must find the man guilty; but the very intelligent twelve men in the box could not get over the "swearing through glass," and at once acquitted the scamp, who, leaving the dock, exclaimed:

"Ah, Mr. —, when I come again to prig a bit of bacon I'll take good care of your little window."

Mr. Justice Maule once tried a case of attempted murder. The prisoner quarrelled with the prosecutor, and drawing a large clasp knife, held him to the ground,

and so nearly disembowelled him that it was only, as it were, by a miracle that he recovered. The smart counsel for the defence told the jury that although the indictment charged the offence as being "with intent to kill and murder," and "with intent to do grievous bodily harm," they could, under a recent statute, find the prisoner guilty of "unlawful wounding," which was only a misdemeanour.

Maule did not, apparently, understand how solidly matter-of-fact and without question the average common jurymen always take anything like direction on a point of law which may come from the Bench, and he accordingly summed up in a manner the result of which should, for all time, be a warning to judges not to chaff jurymen. Said he, "Gentlemen, if you think the prisoner knocked the prosecutor down, drew his knife, stabbed and cut him in such a manner that his clothes were divided with the violence of the act, his abdomen ripped up, and his intestines made to issue from the wound in such manner as that the doctor tells you only the mercy of God has enabled him to appear here this day, merely without any ill-feeling, and more as an accident than as anything else, you will say it is unlawful wounding." The jury construed this sarcastic remark of the Judge as a direction to them, and instantly returned a verdict of "unlawful wounding."

In a case of murder, tried before Baron Parke, the Judge told the jury that as there was very little, if any, evidence of malice adduced against the prisoner, they could, if they thought fit, find him guilty of manslaughter only. "Just," added his Lordship, "as in an indictment for child-murder you may acquit the woman of murder and find her guilty of concealing the birth of the child." The jury took several hours to consider their verdict, and at last returned into Court with one of "concealment of birth." Such verdicts as this were perfectly comprehensible in those Draconic days when a paltry theft was punishable with death, and juries by the score returned verdicts of "manslaughter" rather than send a man to the gallows for stealing a pair of trousers or a ham, but can only be attributed to gross ignorance nowadays.

It is extraordinary how often in murder cases the guilty party will himself bring his own guilt home. Some three-and-a-half decades back the late Baron Alderson had a case of this description before him.

Ten years before, the prisoner had robbed and murdered an old gentleman on the high road. The plunder amounted to a large sum in gold, and a very peculiar and old silver watch. The coin the murderer retained, acting on the thieves' well-known maxim, "that none can swear to gold," a maxim, by the way, which is not always correct; the watch was hidden in the depths of the hollow of an old tree, and carefully covered over with earth. He shortly afterwards went abroad, and nothing was heard of him for the next nine years. The corpse of the old gentleman was discovered; the coroner duly held an inquest upon it; the jury returned a verdict of "wilful murder against some person or persons unknown;" the body was buried; and there the case to all appearances had come to an end. Abroad, the murderer prospered; the world went very well with him; and apparently he had all he could desire. But all this while, there was a Nemesis behind him, impelling him on the road to the gallows. He hankered after that watch. With money enough to buy the best gold one procurable, he wished to wear the old-fashioned silver one, which he had taken from the old man he had killed. Unable to resist the temptation, he returned from abroad, recovered the watch, found, as was only to be expected from where it had been so long, that it was in want of repairs, and actually took it to the very watch-maker who had been in the habit of keeping it in order for the victim. He at once recognised the watch; the police were sent for; when the man went for the watch he was arrested; evidence accumulated fast against him, and, when arraigned, he deprived himself of his only chance of escape by pleading guilty, and was in due course executed. The same Judge once used language which might fairly have been described as incitement to crime. He was trying a civil action, in which the plaintiff claimed damages against the defendant for having fractured his skull and broken some half-a-dozen ribs. There was practically no defence, the case for the plaintiff being unanswerable, and the jury returned a verdict for him, with damages, one pound sterling. Said Baron Alderson; "We won't try any more causes with this jury. Call another." And as they were retiring, he remarked, "Go home, gentlemen, and as you value your heads and limbs at one pound, I hope you may find some liberal purchasers on your journey."

Many cases are known in which a

third party has been mysteriously influenced to do something—often against both reason and interest—which has resulted in the detection of crime. A young unmarried woman, living in a good situation with an Oxfordshire farmer, had with her her child, a boy of two-and-a-half years old. This incumbrance standing in the way of her being married, she made up her mind to rid herself of it. Obtaining a holiday, she left the farm with the boy, giving out that she was about to visit a relative some miles off. Next day she returned, and stating that she had left the child to be brought up by her cousin, the statement was naturally believed. Next day two men were at work harvesting in a field on the next farm to where the mother was employed. One of them was a labourer on tramp, and enquired of his companion the best way to get to the place where he had taken lodgings. The best way was told him, and he was further instructed that when he reached a small coppice he was not to go through, but round it, otherwise he might fall down an unprotected old dry well. All the remainder of that day the thought of this well worried the tramp; he felt an intense and unaccountable desire to see it, and so earnestly solicited the man working with him to accompany him to see it, that the other agreed to do so. When they arrived at the coppice and found the well, both were afraid to stand on the edge and look down, and laid down to do so. Presently one threw down a stone, when, instead of hearing the sound of its fall, they heard a cry. Another stone was dropped with the same result. Certain that something alive was at the bottom, they promptly went to the nearest farmhouse and returned with more men, a lantern, and ropes. A plucky lad volunteered to go down, and was lowered, the rope round his waist, the lantern tied to his wrist. He found at the bottom, one hundred and twenty feet from the surface, lying between four pointed, perpendicular stakes—on either of which a man might have been impaled—a living, bleeding, and sobbing baby boy, which, when brought to the surface, was at once recognised as the child of the girl at the adjacent farm. The mother, after conviction, when asked how she got the child down the well without killing it instantly, replied that she had not the heart to throw the poor boy down, so procured a long cord, doubled it under the child's body, and when it reached the

bottom let go of one end and draw the cord up by the other. The amount of heart possessed by a mother who could leave her offspring to slowly perish of starvation in preference to slaying it outright, must be very small both in quantity and quality. The poor innocent was thirty-six hours without food and in pitchy darkness, and was so cruelly cut, scratched, and bruised, that he still bore the marks weeks afterwards, when, at Oxford Assizes at the trial, he was stripped and placed on the table to show them. And had his inhuman mother any heart in her composition, she must have felt cut to the very core then when the poor little fellow put out his arms and cried to go to her. The death sentence was recorded against her, but commuted to penal servitude for life.

Another remarkable case of this nature occurred in Somerset, and in the motive is exactly on all fours with the Swansea case of a year or two back. A widower, an agricultural labourer, wished to re-marry, but his choice refused on the ground that he had an eight-year-old girl and could not provide comfortably for both. Were the child "out of the way," she would consent. A week afterwards he took the child out for a walk, and the mother's sister who had kissed her when her father took her away, was the last, except her father, who ever saw her alive. The father did not return, and not much notice seems to have been taken of the double disappearance for a month or so. Then, by some accident, it came to the ears of one of the local Justices of the Peace. The idea—which he could never account for—at once possessed, and filled his mind to the exclusion of all else, that the girl had been murdered and that her body would be found at the bottom of a neighbouring disused coal-pit. He expressed this idea at the next meeting of the magistrates, and urged upon them the examination of the pit; but not having any evidence to support his idea, and the pit being full of water, they declined to do anything on the ground that to pump out the pit would cause a larger expenditure of public money than they would be justified in making on the mere suspicion of one individual. But the magistrate could obtain no peace for his own mind, and eventually determined to empty the pit at his own cost, which he did at the expense of over two hundred pounds. At the bottom of the pit the workers were horrified to discover the body of the unfortunate girl, rolled and tied up in her father's old

mackintosh. The father was speedily captured in South Wales—the atrocious nature of the crime causing all the inhabitants of the West-country to become amateur detectives for the nonce—was brought to trial, convicted, and hanged. He made a full confession before execution. He had taken her to a field and bade her play while he worked. The work he pretended to be engaged in was to dig a trench—her intended grave—and while he dug she made garlands of wild flowers and placed them round his hat. When ready, he split her head in twain with the spade and buried her. On the next day and the next he visited the spot to see if all was undisturbed. On the third day he found that one of her feet was exposed, and this so terrified him that he returned at night, took up the remains, and threw them down the pit.

Jurymen are better off in these times than in the good old days when it was the law to endeavour to starve them into a verdict. It is bad enough now to be put to loss of time and money, with little or inadequate recompense, without being starved or fined into the bargain. In the early part of the reign of Henry the Eighth, Lord Chief Justice Reed tried an action when on circuit, in which the jury were locked up, but before giving their verdict had eaten and drunk, which they all confessed. This being reported to the Judge, he fined them each heavily, and took their verdict. In Hilary Term, Sixth Henry the Eighth, the case came up before the full Court of Queen's Bench, on a joint motion to set aside the verdict on the ground of informality of trial, the jury having eaten when they should have fasted; and next to remit the fines under the peculiar circumstances of the case. The jury averred that they had made up their minds in the case before they ate, and had returned into Court with a verdict, but finding the Lord Chief Justice had "run out to see a fray," and not knowing when he might come back, they had refreshment. The Court confirmed both the verdict and the fines.

In "Dyer's Reports" a case is reported of a jury who retired to consider their verdict, and when they came back the Bailiff informed the Judge that some of them (which he could not depose) had been feeding while locked up. Both Bailiff and jury were sworn, and the pockets of the latter were examined, when it appeared that all they had about them "pippins,"

of which "some of them confessed they had eaten, and the others said they had not." All were severely reprimanded, and those who had eaten were fined twelve shillings each, and those who had not were fined six shillings each, "for that they had them in their pockets."

At a certain Assizes two men were tried for poaching. The prisoners' Counsel challenged every jurymen called excepting those from X; but this fact was not noticed at the time. The case was clear, the prisoners being taken red-handed. But when the evidence was over, the prisoners' Counsel submitted that there was no case against them, and urged some most frivolous objections to the evidence. The Judge waxed impatient, the Counsel warm, and both got more excited as the argument went on, until at last the latter said that, in his opinion, there was no case to go to the jury, and he declined to address them. The Judge shortly summed up, and the jury, not leaving the box, astounded all in Court except the Counsel for the defence, by returning a verdict of "not guilty." When one of the jury was quietly asked afterwards how it was they gave such a verdict, he replied coolly, "Well, our Recorder, he said he thought the law was on prisoners' side, and t'other Judge from Lunnon, he said it warn't; and our Recorder, he said he thought the men weren't guilty, and t'other old man from Lunnon said he thought they were; and it warn't like we was going against our Recorder; and we weren't going to see him bullied neither, so we gave him the verdict." Of course, the Counsel, being Recorder of X, had "packed" a jury of X men.

It has often been complained that some Judges perplex instead of assist the jury by the use of high-flown language. This is an undeniable fact. One deceased Judge would, when a jury had been some time considering their verdict, have them back and then address them:

"Gentlemen, do not allow me to precipitate your deliberations, but if your cogitation is likely to be protracted, the Court will again direct you to retire, and proceed with another portion of the panel."

Very different in manner from this was Mr. Justice Burroughs. After a prolonged argument upon the goodness of the pleading in a record in which a "consequential issue" was contained, he addressed the jury thus:

"Gentlemen, you have been patiently

hearing the learned Counsel and myself talk for some time about a 'consequential issue,' and I don't suppose that you know what a consequential issue is; but I dare say that you do know what a game of skittles is, and know also that if you can properly roll your ball against one of the ninepins, in a right direction, that pin tumbles down and knocks all the other eight after it. Now, gentlemen, this count in the declaration, called a consequential issue, is just like that first ninepin; and if we can bowl it over, as we have done, all the other causes of action fall to the ground also. You must find a verdict for the defendant."

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcootes," etc.

CHAPTER X.

For a person who appeared to have an endless store of advice and suggestion to bestow, Sir Oracle, otherwise Mr. Paul Behrens, was surprisingly quiet and inoffensive. Your professional adviser, your meddlesome man, is usually a loud and noisy creature, always ready to thrust in his "do this," and "don't do that;" always eagerly persuasive that his course is the only right one to pursue.

Mr. Paul Behrens was not of this kidney. He was for the most part a silent man, and when he spoke, it was with a sparing of words that was quite admirable in its way. And yet whence—if not from this friend, who certainly stuck close if he spoke little—did Mr. Burton get the ideas that so slowly filtered through his stupid, muddled, innocent brain?

Tilly, who was not much attracted towards analysis of character—young and healthy people seldom are—yet found herself sometimes wondering about Mr. Paul Behrens. On the whole, however, she contented herself with laughing a little at him, and liking him moderately. There was no reason why she should dislike him. He rendered her many little services; he was always pleasant, with just that dash of chivalry in his courtesy that is acceptable to a young and pretty girl. He did not make love to her; but then she would have held any such endeavour on his part to be quite as odd, inappropriate, and unbecoming as if Uncle Bob were to attempt to flirt with Miss Walton. In other words,

Tilly considered Mr. Paul Behrens old, though he was not more than forty-six, and looked perhaps even less. His German origin, which had left no trace on his accent, betrayed itself in a certain thickness of outline that might become corpulence by-and-by, but as yet his figure was fairly good. His features were also good, though his eyes, of a deep blue, were set a little near together; his hair, long beard and moustache, were of a Saxon blondness and a silky lightness that was very effective; on the whole, Mr. Paul Behrens was a "personable" man, and even an ornamental personage, when compared with Uncle Bob, to whom Nature had been but scantily courteous.

Of his inner man—his occupations, habits, antecedents—nobody appeared to know anything. Reticent people have one great advantage over babblers; they are never expected to make any personal revelations. A silent man's silence about himself is always respected; few have the courage to assault the barrier of reserve behind which he entrenches himself. Thus when Tilly, with feminine inquisitiveness, questioned her uncle about this new friend, he could tell her very little.

"He's something in the City," he said; and Tilly was quite satisfied. Most people are quite satisfied with this answer. The very vagueness of the definition gives it a charm. By being "something" in the City, you may be anything; to the ordinary mind it conveys an idea of hurry and bustle; of a rushing to and fro in the pursuit of gains; a heaping, ingathering, storing of money. Money is the first and last association; to be a City man is—or was, in happier days—to be rich; and to be rich is, as Fred Temple remarked, a character in itself.

Mr. Paul Behrens, at least, appeared to have all the money he desired to have, and business made no burdensome demands on his leisure, which he bestowed freely on his new friends. If he rushed frantically about in the City, after the popular belief, he always walked slowly enough when he approached the hotel.

"There comes that man," said Honoria one day, as she stood with Tilly watching the ever changing and shifting drama of the streets. "He always looks so irritatingly composed—unmoved—what is it?"

Tilly look down on the throng and presently singled out "that man" by his light beard.

"I think you don't like him," she remarked, yet without resentment.

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Honoria evasively; "I don't know him."

Now this was one of the very reasons why she should and did dislike him. She was a London girl, and, in spite of her love of independence, she distrusted a man to whom she had not been properly introduced. With Tilly it was all the other way. She asked for no credentials; the habit of trustfulness was too deep-rooted to be lightly shaken. She liked people until they gave her some strong and good ground for disliking them.

"I think he is nice," she said stoutly. "He's very pleasant and useful. I believe he has been to see about the opera-box for to-morrow night. You will see; he will come in presently with good news, and you must stay and benefit by it."

"I wish he would give his judgement on the boarding-house question," said Honoria, who liked now and then to thrust slyly at this gentleman's influence over her friends. "Why does he keep us all in such suspense? Is it to enhance the value of his verdict when it comes? It will come too late for me if he does not deliver it now."

"It is Uncle Bob who must decide," said Tilly loyally.

"I don't believe you want to come," Honoria spoke with melancholy reproach. "I shall go away to-morrow and never see you again."

It was no light matter to her to lose a friend who was engaging and interesting; a friend possessing, moreover, an uncle who showered down opera-boxes, and theatre tickets, and new gowns, and jewellery with so lavish a hand. This is putting the matter rather grossly; but very few of this world's friendships are perfectly disinterested.

"I do want to come," said Tilly with energy. Honoria had indeed painted a boarding-house life in such glowing terms that she could not but desire to share it. Charming society all the day long—morning, noon, and night, if you were so insatiable as to desire that—and no cares; no orderings of luncheons, and dinners, and suppers; no wrestling with house-keeping and toiling after new dishes. "If only they will give Uncle Bob enough to eat," she said, putting in words a fear that haunted her imagination.

"They will give you anything if you can pay for it; and happily you can."

The subject was still under discussion when Mr. Behrens knocked at the door and was granted permission to enter.

"Well," questioned Tilly gaily, "have you succeeded?"

"I have succeeded. The box is yours."

"Then you must wait, Honoria; you must indeed. We can't go without you."

She looked at Mr. Behrens; but he did not assent to the statement. Perhaps he thought it possible to go without Miss Walton.

"Miss Walton wishes to leave us to-morrow," Tilly explained. "Think how I shall miss her; how lonely I shall be; how empty this room will seem."

"Miss Walton may relent," said Behrens, with his quiet smile.

"Can't," said Honoria, shaking her head and smiling too. If she disliked Mr. Behrens, she was not going to show her disfavour. "If it were simply a matter of doing what one wishes"—she threw out her hands with a significant gesture—"but you can help us to meet again, Mr. Behrens."

"I, my dear lady! How can that be?"

"In this way," she went on with a full, direct look at him, as if she challenged those deep-set eyes of his to meet hers. "I daresay you will say it is selfish, and no doubt you would be right; but I am anxious to secure as much as possible of Mr. and Miss Burton's society. If it is selfish it is natural, you will agree. You would like to do the same, would you not?" She smiled again. "And, in order to secure it, I want them to come and live in the house where I am living. It is a boarding-house, and it bears a very high character. It is very select. Mr. Burton would not need to fear loneliness, as he well might after enjoying so much of your society. He would very soon make friends, safe friends. As for Miss Burton, she would have me——"

She looked across archly at Tilly, who was twisting the cord of the blind absently in her fingers. She was not quite sure if it was fair to her uncle to state the case and engage counsel in his absence.

"Help me to plead, Mr. Behrens," said Honoria, turning to him once more.

"I am afraid you overrate my powers," said Behrens pleasantly. If this were a gauntlet the young lady was throwing, he was quite ready to pick it up. "And besides, I can bring no special knowledge to help your cause. I never lived in a boarding-house. I rather think my opinions about such places have been formed on 'Todgers's.' You remember 'Todgers's,' Miss Burton?"

"Yes," said Tilly, laughing. "The fame of 'Todgers's' has penetrated even to Lilliesmuir. It is considered there to be an absolutely correct picture of London life. If it were so, I don't think I'd want so much to try it."

"Then it is your wish to try it?"

"If my uncle wishes it—yes; not unless."

"Your will is law to him," said Behrens with grave graciousness. "Miss Walton has, it seems to me, gained her cause already. My persuasions will certainly not be required."

"No one must persuade," said Tilly quickly. "It is for my uncle to decide. It is he who must choose."

"Yet there are, no doubt, great advantages, as Miss Walton tells us, in such a way of life," he went on.

"Yes, indeed," broke in Honoria smilingly. "I ought to know, for I have tried the communistic principle very often. It is a family, but it is a big family, with every variety of temper and character. You don't get tired of each other as you would if there were just two or three. There is nothing so dangerous to friendship as to see too much of your friend; isn't that so?" said this young lady, looking at Mr. Paul Behrens with innocent frankness.

"That speaks ill for our friendship," Tilly wheeled round with a laugh. "What is going to happen to it if I come to live in your boarding-house? Are you to be invisible to me there?"

"Not invisible, but not so frequently, constantly visible," said Honoria, reassuringly. "I shall be mixed, I shall be diluted. You will take me along with so many others that you will not taste my flavour too strongly. There is a metaphor for you! I believe it is as mixed as my personality will be!"

"I prefer you as you are."

"Every one must," said Mr. Behrens with a grave face. "We should be sorry to lose even a hint of Miss Walton's piquancy."

"It is war to the knife, and he knows it," said Honoria to herself that night, in the seclusion of her high chamber. "And yet I do believe he means to give us his august permission. Why, I wonder! Into what scheme of his can my poor plans fit? Plans! I have none but to get them away from him, and yet he will let them go! I do not like thee, Dr. Fell, though you are too clever to give me a reason for distrust. But I love Tilly; I believe I am getting

quite foolishly fond of Tilly. It is against all tradition that I should care for her. Tilly who is rich; Tilly who is charming; Tilly who is beautiful; and yet—I love her. I love her better than you do, Mr. Paul Behrens. I love her well enough to protect her from you, if I can."

Honorina stumbled on a little scene the next afternoon, when she looked into the red velvet sitting-room. Tilly had put on some of her new finery just come home, and was rehearsing her part for the night to a little audience of two. Uncle Bob was agape with admiration; his mouth wide after the rustic manner; his eyes wide also, as they followed this young Queen sailing up and down, and taking shy glances at herself in the mirror; and there was that Behrens—that objectionable, meddlesome, ever-present Behrens—actually holding her fan and examining her critically! Yes, it was criticism quite as much as delight that his face expressed, and doubtless it was he who had suggested jewels, for Uncle Bob presently exclaimed:

"Well, if it's diamonds that's the thing, she shall have them, the best, too, that money can buy. Dang it all!" he cried, bringing a sudden fist down on the table, "what's the use of the money if we're not to get some show out of it!"

"No, no, no," negatived Tilly, lifting a saucy head, "diamonds would be out of character. I'm beauty unadorned, as Mr. Behrens has just been telling me." Then spying her friend at the door, she made a little rush at her.

"Come and inspect me, criticise me, examine me, Honorina," she said. "What can these two poor things know? They are only men, and not even men with daughters or granddaughters to enlighten their minds——" (this was surely a little hard on Behrens.) She cast a laughing glance back at them. "What can they know? Now you—I rely upon you—take me to pieces, don't spare me; don't be like those flatterers; tell me the candid truth."

Honorina did as she was bid. She flung herself with ardour upon the task. She pinched, patted, shook out the drapery; made Tilly parade slowly before her, sit, turn, pirouette, till criticism was exhausted. What cared she for Behrens, with his cold, polite smile, for Tilly's laughter and little sallies, for the long-lipped seriousness of Uncle Bob, who hung solemnly upon her words? This was a case in which he recognised the value of her opinion. She was a lady; even Behrens, the oracle Behrens,

must bow to her on the question of a toilette.

"You are perfect," said Honorina fervently, giving judgement at last; "it fits and it hangs; it drapes and it suits you. To my thinking it wants nothing, not even diamonds, though if Mr. Behrens says it does, of course I submit. He must know best."

"Poor Mr. Behrens!" said Tilly, turning to him with a smile. "What a shame it is to bother you with my affairs—such very small affairs as a girl's dress! Have you been holding my fan all this time? Now, I will release you and Uncle Bob. Take my poor uncle away, please, and give him something to eat. The audience is over!" She made them both a merry curtsy.

Of course, Behrens protested that he was charmed, enchanted, privileged; nothing was more remote from his thoughts than weariness. There was further discussion of the jewel question; quite a hot little passage of arms between Tilly and her uncle, he protesting, she persuading, but Behrens took no part in it. "Oh, the sly man!" cried Honorina to herself as she too stood a mere spectator of the battle. "As if Mr. Burton would have been so obstinate unless somebody had put the notion into his stupid old head!"

When at last they went away, Uncle Bob still doggedly unpersuaded that Tilly could be a "real lady" without jewels, Honorina made quite certain that they had set out to make the purchase there and then. Nothing would have surprised her less than to see them return in an hour or two laden with precious offerings to hang on Tilly's neck and arms, and to set sparkling in her sunny hair.

What object could this man, this Behrens, have in encouraging such doubtful expenditure? Tilly could not wear diamonds in her maidenhood, and she was charming enough already to please the most fastidious taste. She had blossomed wonderfully in those last weeks, and, with all her caprices and little vanities, her love of being beautiful and of being thought beautiful, she still kept the simplicity of her early traditions: it was still of country delights, not of hot-house growth, you thought in looking at her.

"If it is to be anything it should be pearls," said Honorina, thinking aloud.

"It isn't going to be anything," said Tilly seriously. "When I have learned the art of 'cutting a dash,' it will be time

enough for diamonds. I've used my last argument here." She held up a three-cornered note which she had been scribbling. "Uncle Bob always respects it, and even Sir Oracle must yield sometimes. And now, Honoria," she said, having despatched her note by the waiter, "there has been quite enough of me. Come to my room and let us discuss you."

"Oh, my old white frock won't bear discussion."

"We'll see, we'll see," said Tilly, who had plans of her own. "I have an idea, an inspiration. Come and let us seize it before it vanishes."

If Tilly was vain, it was with a vanity that did not absorb her to the exclusion of her friends. Honoria must wear this and try that. A whole afternoon was spent in balancing the merits of various styles of hair-dressing, to discover the one that best suited Honoria's type; many of the new-made purchases found their way to Honoria's drawers and wardrobes, and her ill-filled trunks upstairs.

As for Uncle Bob, it was only a grief that the pains and time expended on him were so ill repaid. He was one of the people—the unhappy people—for whom a tailor can do nothing, whose worst points seem but to be emphasised by good clothes. Nature clearly had him in her thoughts when the slop-shop was invented. All the skill in London could not make him appear at home in his dress coat; the flower which Tilly ruthlessly plucked from the very centre of her bouquet—the bouquet which Behrens had sent her—made matters but more hopeless. In his rough home-spun Mr. Burton might have passed for a laird of simple degree; in the orthodox evening attire he looked like—but Tilly refused to allow the comparison even in her thoughts. She took this ill at ease, this unfortunate Uncle Bob, under her own wing when they went at night to the Opera. She, the young beauty, at whom opera-glasses were levelled; concerning whom questions were whispered from lip to lip, yet set him in the front of the box, chatted to him, appealed to him, pointed out this and that, gave him all her thoughts, forgetful of the two who sat in hostile silence, or made remarks with a hollow and undeceptive politeness. And she was rewarded, though she had not laboured for reward. She toiled up to her friend's room that night before she

had taken off her wraps. She came in, a beautiful, slim vision of loveliness, smiling on Honoria, who had refused to share the supper Uncle Bob was even now eating, and had retired to nurse the grievance of her abandonment to Behrens—to the odious, ironical Behrens.

"Honoria," said Tilly, "I have good news for you, my dear. Uncle told me to-night he had made up his mind to try the boarding-house. It is all his very own doing; he brought the subject up himself. He says he has been making enquiries, and he thinks it's a first-rate idea—these are his own words—'a first-rate idea.' And so now——"

"And so now—I'm not to lose you!" Honoria made a dash at her friend. "I can go away to-morrow with an easy mind, sure, quite sure, that you will follow!"

"Quite sure."

"The Oracle has spoken. He has given his august permission."

"It is my uncle's very own doing; there is no Behrens in the question."

"Is there not!" Honoria, who was clasping Tilly round the waist, threw back her head and looked at her with an incredulous smile. "Is there no Behrens, indeed? Well, I forgive him. I forgive him everything. I forgive him that I had to sit beside him; I forgive that I had to talk to him; I forgive him that I had to take his arm——"

"Why, you speak as if you hated him!"

"Hate him? Am I not most amiably pardoning him? I will take him back into favour to-morrow, if you like; I will do anything, since he has left me you."

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CONTENTS OF PART 224.

No. 970.	PAGE	No. 972.	PAGE
Gretchen. Book V. Chapter I.	553	Gretchen. Book VI. Chapter I.	56
Along the Adriatic. Part I. Loreto and Recanati ..	557	Thomas Bewick	58
Primorose. A Poem	563	All the Year Round. July	54
From her High Estate. Part I.	564	Past and Future. A Poem	57
South African Sketches. Part I.	568	South African Sketches. An Idyl of Gong-gong. In	57
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter XI.	573	Two Parts. Part I.	57
No. 971.		Chronicles of the Welsh Counties. Montgomery and	61
Gretchen. Book V. Chapters II., III.	577	Radnor	61
Racecourses about London. Kempton Park	580	Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter XIV.	65
From her High Estate. Part II.	583		
The Madeira of the East	587	No. 974.	
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter XII.	593	Gretchen. Book VI. Chapter II.	60
No. 973.		South African Sketches. An Idyl of Gong-gong. In	63
Gretchen. Book V. Chapter IV.	1	Two Parts. Part II.	63
Violins and their Makers	5	A Review of Dogs	65
Hospital Life in East London	9	"You must not count your Chickens before they are	61
From her High Estate. Part III.	14	hatched"	65
Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter XIII.	21	Australian Colloquialisms	65
		Uncle Bob's Niece. Chapter XV.	68

Title and Contents of Vol. XL. in this Part.

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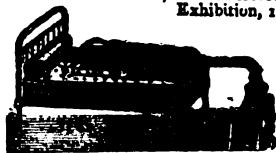
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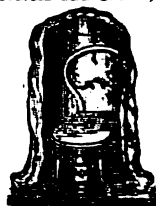
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NO. 970. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conscit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I. IN THE TOILS.

ADRIAN LYLE went home to his lodgings and wrote a note to the Rector, stating that important business called him away for a day.

The first train by which he could reach Leawoods left at six in the morning; there was nothing to do but wait.

He threw himself down on the couch, but sleep was impossible. He was tormented by the image of Gretchen's face; the thought that even now she might be suffering all the tortures of betrayal. It was nothing short of agony to him to picture her under the first shock and horror of this revelation; for he never doubted but that Neale Kenyon had written to her.

As he recalled the night when the young man had given him that assurance of his honesty, he felt furious with himself for his ready credence. The searching light of the present revealed only too plainly the blackness of the past.

All through the dreary hours he lay there fighting with conflicting emotions, a prey to such remorse and agony as assuredly would never have troubled Kenyon himself.

It was a relief when day broke, and he had some excuse for movement and occupation. He bathed and changed his clothes mechanically, and lit a spirit-lamp to make himself some tea before going out in the chill, raw air. Then he walked

eagerly that, as a matter of course, he had to wait twenty minutes there for his train.

It was a dreary journey, and he was faint and wearied before he arrived at the little station he so well remembered. As it boasted of no refreshment room, he got into the musty old fly which was waiting for chance visitors, and drove to the inn. He knew he should need all his strength and self-command for the task before him, and that fact gave him courage enough to delay the meeting, even against his will.

When he reached the cottage, his agitation was so great that for some time he walked up and down outside its sheltering laurels. It needed all his powers of self-command to enable him to open the gate and enter.

It seemed to him that the place had a dreary and deserted aspect. The roses and creepers were mere brown twigs trained against the windows; the warm flower scents no longer made the air sweet with a perpetual incense. Mystery and gloom shrouded it under brooding sky and shadowy woodlands, and silence intense as death seemed to hold it like a spell.

Though Adrian Lyle was not imaginative, the stillness and dreariness oppressed him with an inexplicable horror. His step made no sound on the sodden grass; the door was standing open; and, seeing no sign of bell or knocker, he entered the little dark hall.

A sound of voices reached him; involuntarily he stopped and listened. They came from a room on his left—low, suave tones that woke an answering memory, and then a cry, passionate and indignant, which set his pulses leaping, and seemed to force him like a motive power in its direction. His hand was on the door; it opened; he stood on the threshold

of a small room; the table was littered with books and papers; a wood fire burnt dully on the open hearth; and facing him—her face white as death, her eyes ablaze with wrath and indignation—stood Gretchen. Before her, his hands resting on a chair, over which he leant with insolent ease, was Bari!

It needed but a second for Adrian Lyle's eyes to take in the scene. Then—he was in the room, and at Gretchen's side, and she was clinging to his arm, sobbing like a frightened child.

"Oh—send him away!" she cried wildly. "he is so rude, so insulting—oh, how can I tell you? He has said that Neale and I were never married—that I have no right, no claim—that—oh, Mr. Lyle," she broke off wildly, "say it is not true. I was so young and so ignorant. What could I know of forms and ceremonies? You know—you met us; say it is not true. I will believe your word against a thousand oaths of his."

Clinging to him with trembling hands; looking up at him with tear-drowned eyes; her heart rent and shaken with agony; what likeness was there between this sorrow-stricken, passionate woman and the young, glad-souled creature on whom Adrian Lyle's eyes had rested with such wondering admiration that night in Venice?

Involuntarily he took her hands and held them closely, and the very touch of his seemed to bring her strength and comfort.

He turned to Bari, and something in his eyes made the crafty Italian cringe, and falter, and shrink away—so grand and kingly did his accuser look.

"You pitiful cur!" he said, holding back, as in a leash, the fierce and wrathful words which had been raging in his brain, "how dare you come here with your cowardly threats? Who sent you?"

"My master!" said Bari; but his voice faltered, and he drew nearer to the door. Even clergymen had been known to be violent under provocation.

"Your—master!" dropped slowly from Adrian Lyle's white lips. "I don't believe it."

"He has a letter from Neale; he showed it me," sobbed Gretchen; "but I don't, I can't believe it. How could he marry his cousin, when I am his wife already?"

Adrian Lyle loosed her hands and led her to the door.

"Go," he said, firmly but gently. "It is not fit that you should listen to this man's insults. Leave him to me."

Meekly as a child she obeyed. That sense of rest, and peace, and comfort, which always came to her with Adrian Lyle's presence, held her passive and content even in this hour of strained and torturing agony.

The moment the door closed he turned to Bari, and faced him with stern and unflinching eyes.

"Now," he said, "tell me the truth—if you can."

An evil smile crossed the man's lips.

"In the character of Madame's new-protector?" he said sneeringly. "She has not had to wait long."

Adrian Lyle's face grew white as death. He made one step, seized the man by the shoulders, and shook him as a dog shakes a rat.

"Another such word," he said, "and I will toss you out of the window, like the carrion you are! How dare you insult an innocent woman in my presence!"

Bari grew livid. But he was too great a coward to resent openly. His day would come, he told himself. To strike in the dark was often easier and more satisfactory.

"I only told the truth," he said. "Mr. Kenyon bade me inform this—lady—with a mocking tone that made Adrian Lyle's blood tingle in his veins—"of his intended marriage with his cousin. Those 'breaks' are of every-day occurrence with men of the world. I suppose Monsieur knows that, even though he wears a priest's cassock!"

"Do you mean to say," demanded Adrian Lyle, "that Mr. Kenyon was not married—legally married? That all this time—"

"Mr. Kenyon had the best intentions," said Bari, coolly. "But unfortunately the circumstances were romantic, and the legalities troublesome. Mr. Kenyon carried the young lady off from her home, and from her intended vocation—that of a nun. There was no time for ceremony of any sort. No offence, Monsieur," as he saw the dark flush that leapt into Adrian's Lyle's face. "I am only stating plain facts."

"But the priest," muttered Adrian Lyle, "the priest who, she said, married them in Vienna?"

An evil smile crossed the man's lips. "Some form was gone through, I believe, to satisfy her. She was so eager to get away from her home and people that she was easily satisfied. But they are not legally married, and Mr. Kenyon is tired—"

"Silence," thundered Adrian Lyle. "I do not know which is the greater villain—your master or yourself. You have evidently aided him effectually in this rascality. But you have not only a defenceless woman to deal with; you shall answer to me for every deceit you have practised, for every lie you have devised. The world shall know Neale Kenyon as he is!"

"Monsieur's intentions are doubtless as wise as they are—disinterested," sneered Bari; "but he cannot undo what has been done, and he would be wiser to make the best of it. His attentions to the young lady have long ago excited Mr. Kenyon's suspicions. His presence under her roof on this and other occasions may have compromised her more than Monsieur thinks. After all, there is no need to make a great disturbance. The field is left free, and if Madame weeps a little at first, Monsieur is at hand to dry her tears, and give her spiritual consolation——"

He got no further, for Adrian Lyle seized him with a grip of iron, and the next instant he found himself lying full length on the grass plat before the door, which shut with a loud and sullen clang in his face.

Breathless and panting, Adrian Lyle stood in the little hall, and asked himself with sudden horror what he was to do?

A wall of blackness and infamy seemed closing round that pure and innocent life. He felt powerless—he too had been deceived. His heart was wrung with agony—yet all its pity and devotion could not ward off the blow that must surely fall on that young head.

"How shall I tell her?" he groaned aloud. "How—shall I tell her?"

As the words left his lips he felt the touch of a small cold hand—it drew him gently, unresistingly, into the room he had just left. A face hueless as marble looked back to his own. In all the days and hours that had brought him face to face with sorrow, and misery, and shame, he thought he had never seen any face look so piteous and so sorrow-struck as this one.

"Don't deceive me," she said in a hard, changed voice. "You at least will speak the truth. Is it quite true—what Bari said?"

"My poor child——" he faltered.

She drew back a step or two, holding out her hands as if to ward off a blow.

"Not yet," she whispered faintly. "Give

me a little time. I have not been strong lately . . . I can't bear it just yet——"

He saw a change come over the white face, the swaying figure, but he stood there fixed and immovable in his own great misery.

There was a sofa near her. She suddenly sank down upon it; and he watched her lay her face upon the crimson cushion, and cover it with her trembling hands, as though she wanted to hide it and herself from even his compassion.

"Do men often behave so?" she said at last, in the same cold and strained voice. "Bari said it was quite—usual. I am so ignorant. I did not know . . . oh, how it all comes back! The warnings, the care, the strictness. I can understand it all now . . . It was from this they wanted to save me . . . from this . . ."

He looked for tears, he hoped for tears, but none came. She was beyond their poor relief. The stab had gone to the core and centre of her faithful heart.

"You did not guess?" she asked suddenly, dropping her hands, and looking straight at him, "you never thought but that I was his—wife?"

"He swore to me that you were," said Adrian Lyle hoarsely. "I thought there might be something not strictly legal, not quite as usual; but he said when you came to England he would make all that right, and have the ceremony performed again. Did he not do so?"

She shook her head, and once again let it fall in the same helpless fashion against the crimson cushion.

There was a moment of intense and painful silence.

"What can I do?" she said at last. He . . . he is tired of me. I can see that now—so plainly. Were I fifty times his wife, I would not force him back. What is the value of an empty heart . . . an empty form? And he wants to marry his cousin now. Bari says it will ruin his whole future if he does not."

"Do not believe Bari," interrupted Adrian Lyle, as he slowly paced to and fro the narrow room. "He is an arrant liar!"

He stopped beside her, and looked down at the quiet figure and the hidden face. For a few seconds all the room was still. When he spoke at last, his voice was low and broken with intense emotion:

"In the sight of Heaven," he said, "you are his wife. He cannot forsake you in this heartless and selfish fashion."

Then he remembered the letter Sir Roy had shown him—the words of Alexis Kenyon. Here was proof enough of perfidy. His arguments could not convince even himself—how could they convince her?

"Did he write to you?" he asked gently.

"No," she said. "Only to Bari—he showed me the letter. He has never written to me," she went on, with a little quiver in her voice, "since he went abroad. I know he is tired. Everything shows it."

"This is no mere question of a passing fancy," said Adrian Lyle sternly. "There are such things as duty and morality to be considered."

She pushed the loose and tumbled hair from off her delicate temples, and looked at him with sad and burning eyes:

"Do you think," she said, "I could hold him against his will . . . now that he does not want me? I thought his love was like my own. But it is not—it never could have been. I . . . I would not have pained him for all the world could offer. But he—" she said no more, only laid her hand upon her heart with a gesture of mute despair.

The growing pathos of the young face— young, alas! no longer with the light and radiance of the spirit within—tried to the uttermost that self-control which Adrian Lyle had set upon himself with fierce determination.

"Something must be done," he said at last. "You cannot be flung aside in this fashion. Let me appeal to his uncle on your behalf. He is a good and honourable man—he—"

"His uncle!" she interposed with sudden passion. "Her father? Tell them my pitiful story!—ask their compassion, their aid? Never! I would die first."

"But what will you do?" he urged, and the misery in his face would have touched her to the quick, had she seen it.

"I shall go home," she said piteously. "I will tell them that they were right and I was wrong. I committed a great sin, and I must bear its punishment."

"Oh, no," he cried wildly. "You shall not. The sin was not yours."

"It was mine," she said resolutely, "in the first instance. I deceived them, and I disobeyed them. I am justly punished."

He drew back. He felt as if the ache and torture of his heart must speak out, or it would stifle him. The veins in his

temples swelled like cords, his face grew ashen white.

Suddenly she looked up at him, and those deep eyes full of earnest sorrow and bitter pain startled her like a revelation.

"You have always been so good to me," she faltered. "I don't know why, but you have. I remember what you said about my needing a friend . . . but you can't help me now."

"I can," he said passionately. "And I will. Do you think I am not man enough to resent such an insult as this, to a trusting and defenceless woman? Is your life, that was so beautiful and innocent, to be flung aside in this cruel manner?"

She put out her hand as if to stay the impulsive words.

"I gave him my life," she said slowly. "It was his to do with as he pleased . . . He does not need it any longer—that is all."

Then she rose and stood for a moment there, with her hand resting on the couch as if to steady herself.

"You must leave me now," she said. "I want to be alone—to think. It is so hard to realise that all is over—for oh, I loved him so—I loved him so!"

The tears came then. She threw herself down on the couch once more in a tempest of grief, which shook all Adrian Lyle's self-control to the uttermost.

"Yes, I will leave you," he said with effort. "I can do nothing: I can only say, try to bear it—try to remember there is consolation above, far surpassing that of earth. I will come and see you to-morrow, if I may."

She did not answer, she could not frame any words. She only put out her hand, cold and trembling, and wet with her tears. He held it for a moment, looking down at her with mute anguish. Then gently, solemnly, he bent his head, and touched with cold and quivering lips those trembling fingers.

Then her hand dropped at her side once more, and a sense of stillness and deadness seemed to come over her. The paroxysm of weeping passed. She heard the sound of a closing door, the faint, dull echo of a passing step. But thought was paralysed for a time. She was only conscious of lying there, her face against the cushion, her eyes closed to the sunlight, as the brief winter's day melted into early gloom—lying there, her young life uprooted, and flung into the dust, the agony of a living death fastening with cruel fangs upon her heart.

ALONG THE ADRIATIC.*

PART II. LORETO AND RECANATI.

WE left Brindisi on the following day, by the afternoon train. The weather was inspiring, and the country showed at its best. But until the sun went down, our train dragged its tedious way through miles of scenery as different from the conventional idea of Italian landscape as can be imagined. Of mountains or hills there was not a vestige; but, instead, vast malarious flats, with bright-green grass and grain in the foreground broken by occasional vineyards in the purple earth, and with the steel-blue horizon-line thirty or forty miles away. Here and there the broad plain was set with a single olive or almond tree; or a ramshackle hut of boughs, perhaps buttressed against a tree trunk, which in summer may throw a shelter of leaves over it; or a solitary husbandman in blue, with a shining adze on his shoulder; or a group of milk-white oxen. And when the sunset colours dyed this infinite stretch of country crimson and gray, and seemed to throw every blade of grass or stalk of wheat into strong relief, one could not but confess that there is nothing under the sun without a peculiar beauty of its own, which may at times vie with any other kind of beauty.

But oh! the weariness of this Italian express! At no time did it run faster than twenty miles an hour, and at every little wayside station it lingered until the guards and engine-men had talked all the news of the day with the authorities and the two gaily-dressed gens-d'armes who invariably stand to arms on the platform as the train draws to a halt. Before the night came upon us we had passed but two places of importance; and at one or other of them we had to follow Italian custom and lay in provision of sausage and bread, figs, and raisins, and a few flasks of wine in rush-covered bottles, that we might not go supperless to sleep.

For a few miles this evening we had a companion who supplied us with a little entertainment. He was an Italian gentleman, travelling from one small station to another. In his dress he was almost more of a dandy than seemed to be consonant with good taste. His boots were very small, with high heels, cut low to show

his green silk stockings; his trousers were of maroon velvet, so tight that he had to sit down with infinite precaution; his vest, studded with onyx buttons, was strung to and fro with gold chains, among which clanked the rim of the gold-mounted eye-glasses, which he set upon his nose and discarded every other minute; and upon his head he wore a natty little Tyrolese hat of green felt, with a tall feather in it.

And what do you think he travelled with for company's sake? Nothing less than a large black cat, which he brought into the carriage in a common canvas bag. For a moment or two puss was kept in struggling confinement; but when the train had started, and the windows were safely closed, the gentleman peeped in at his pet, and in a moment puss had leaped from the opening and was purring loudly, with tail erect, while she stepped from one shoulder of her master to the other. It was curious to see how the temper of this gentleman was quite at the mercy of the cat. You would expect that a man of forty-five or so would have his whims and inclinations well under the command of his reason. But it was not so. In an unwary moment puss stepped from the broadcloth of her master's coat between her master's collar and his skin. A scratch was the consequence. Hereupon the man grew carmine, ejaculated angrily, tore the cat from her place of vantage, held her with one hand by the scruff of the neck, and with the other white jewelled hand belaboured her until her squeals made us interfere on her behalf. Then, with many bows and apologies, the Italian gentleman consented to forgive the cat; in token of which forgiveness, he took the battered and aching body of his favourite into his arms and pressed it fondly to his bosom, the tail of the cat in the meanwhile sweeping with angry curves across his face. He kissed puss on the nose, stroked her, tickled her on the back, and with other such fond cajoleries, won her confidence again. But, ere the queer pair left us, there was another furious outbreak, and for one dreadful half minute, the man and his cat fought with each other tooth and nail, and we were deafened with the noise of a menagerie.

Eventually puss was coaxed into her sack, the string of which was drawn tight, and, wishing us a cordial good-night, the Italian gentleman transported his struggling friend to the platform. There was a spot

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, vol. x1. p. 520.

of blood on his nose, however, which did not improve his well-preserved beauty.

All through the night we ran along the shore of the Adriatic. Inland, we passed the heights of the Apennines—Majella and the Gran Sasso, the latter being the king of the chain, and nearly ten thousand feet high. But the play of the moonlight on the smooth waters of the sea was better worth seeing than these great mountain-shapes, which are more often than not so wrapped round with heavy white clouds that none but close students of Nature can say where the snow ends and the clouds begin.

We were nearing Ancona, and in the fourteenth hour of our long sitting from Brindisi, when the day began to break. What a sight it was, to be sure! The moon was shining quietly upon the Adriatic, and upon a strata of still cloud-shapes that brooded over the sea. It was as if we looked upon a lagoon set with silver islands. Then, suddenly almost, the silvery radiance was transfused with a coral glow. This deepened, and, full in the midst of the waters and the clouds, uprose the red sun and flashed upon us. Instead of the gentle moonbeams on the waters, there was now a wide track of golden light which it dazzled us to look at. The sea, which heretofore had been quiet and beautiful as death, now seemed to throb briskly upon the strand, and the crimson and striped sails of the early fishers' boats, a mile or more from land, swelled, and urged their masters on their way. Turning from the sea to the land, we saw other signs of this instantaneous change from night to day. The well-tilled slopes, vineyards, and olive-groves were bright with sunlight; the snowy cisterns set in the fields caught the eye; heavy drays were moving on the roads; and the sturdy labourers of the March country—men and women—were already afoot in groups, with their implements in their hands. We opened the windows to let in the day, and with the meagre chirp of birds came the perfume of the fruit trees and flowers, all refreshed by the cool dew of the past night.

It was at five o'clock of this beautiful spring morning that I left the train at the station of Loreto. Every one knows for what Loreto is famous, and has been held in honour by all devout Catholics from the Popes downward for the last six hundred years. Here, encrusted with sculpture and architectural adornments, is to be

found the Santa Casa, or Holy Dwelling in which Christ and His mother lived long ago at Nazareth. How comes it to be at Loreto, an insignificant little ecclesiastical city on a hill-slope of the Apennines, many hundreds of miles from Palestine? How, indeed, one may ask? But the historical narrative tells us the tale with a circumstantiality and conviction which go far to remove the doubt of sceptics, if not quite far enough.

For many years the Holy Dwelling remained at Nazareth, honoured by the Christians who survived their Master, and even used by the Apostles for the celebration of the Eucharist. But when the Romans took all Palestine under their suzerainty, Nazareth suffered. The town decayed, the old houses fell to pieces, and the old believers went away, or changed their faith. Thus for centuries Nazareth was little more than a name to those who preserved the tradition of Christianity. To the noble mother of Constantine the Great it was due that the Santa Casa was rediscovered and honoured afresh. Helena went from Jerusalem to the north, and investigating among the mounds of rubbish which stood for Nazareth, the Santa Casa came to light, miraculously preserved from the ruin and defilement which surrounded it. The very altar at which the Apostles were wont to celebrate the Eucharist was found within the house intact. A miraculous wall had been raised by superhuman hands round the house to protect it. Again the Santa Casa attracted the devout in crowds for a long period of time. But once again Palestine fell under the sway of rulers who had no sympathy with Christianity. To the Saracens the Santa Casa was but a source of mockery; and so, to deliver it from the hands of the Moslems, the first stage of the wonderful compound miracle which was to bring the house finally to rest at Loreto, was worked in the year 1291. Angels detached the house from its surroundings, and, lifting it upon their shoulders, flew away with it. And whither did they fly? The narrative may speak briefly for itself: "It was on a certain cloudless morning, when the sea was calm and sparkling, that those of the inhabitants of the village of Tersatto who were up at daybreak, saw to their surprise a new house situated upon a hillock close to their dwellings. They ran towards it in amazement; but their wonder was far from being lessened when upon nearing it they perceived that it was a four-sided

building in the shape of a church, having a bell-tower provided with two bells, and the whole of it standing unsupported and without any foundation." It seems that between midnight and the dawn of this tenth of May—a Sunday in the octave of the Ascension—the house had thus suddenly been transported from Palestine to this small town in Dalmatia, on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. Words cannot describe the happiness of these poor Dalmatians, when in a vision it was declared to their priest what the building was that had thus appeared in their midst.

But alas! for some never-explained reason, the Santa Casa did not stay at Tersatto. The villagers and others assembled to honour it in crowds, and did all they could to show their gratitude for its apparition; but in the night of the ninth and tenth of December, 1294, again it was uplifted and moved across the sea, and this time it stayed on the western shores of the Adriatic, near Recanati, a few miles from Loreto. Of the distress that seized these poor Dalmatians, the historians say much. For years and centuries they prayed beseechingly that the Santa Casa might return to them. "Come back to us, O dear Lady; come back to us, with thy house, O Mary!" Such was the refrain of their petitions and lamentations. And even now, six centuries after the date of the transportation of the Santa Casa, it is a common sight to see groups of peasantry from the eastern Adriatic shores crying before the shrine of Loreto, or going on their knees in single file, licking the stones which bind the Holy Dwelling from external observation, and echoing the old prayer.

This time the Santa Casa alighted in a laurel wood, where it was discovered in the morning. Balls of fire had been seen in the air over the site by some shepherds bivouacking in the open; and this wonder, conjoined with the customary revelation about the nature of the Santa Casa, soon drew pilgrims into the laurel wood in crowds. They spent whole weeks round about the house, camping there in a state of holy ecstasy, and regardless of the discomfort they had to suffer. And thus for awhile nothing was heard in the neighbourhood but a perpetual murmur of prayers and jubilant cries. But the number of rich and unprotected pilgrims who resorted, hither did not fail to attract many rogues, who had no care for spiritual concerns. Consequently assaults, robbery,

and even murder, became commonplace occurrences. And so, yet again, the Santa Casa changed its site, moving to a green hill about a mile away, where by right of law it became the property of the two brothers who owned the land on which it stood. These two brothers were at first delighted by the arrival of the Santa Casa. They saw in it a source of wealth, and at once set about exploiting their treasure. But soon they fell to quarrelling about the sacred possession, and they even tried to kill each other. So, justly indignant, the Santa Casa determined to quit them, and made its fourth and last migration to the hill of Loreto, where now it stands fast enclosed in a massive cathedral, and daily honoured by a numerous band of priests and laymen from all parts of the world.

All the rickety cars standing outside the Loreto Station were decorated with boards inscribed "To the Santa Casa!"

"There is a mass at six o'clock," said the driver of my car to me; and he seemed a little scandalised when I remarked that, after a night's railway journey, a bath and breakfast were more to my taste. However, he took me briskly enough up the hill, past the many shrines that lead to the great shrine; past the Municipal Customs Officers, who looked to see that I was not cheating Loreto of any trifle of its revenue; past the many labourers trooping out to the vineyards and orchards on these hot hill-slopes, all with a nod of greeting and congratulations to my landlord, who had me in charge, until we baited at the "Locanda Speranza," in one corner of the market-place. It was a cheerful chance that had brought me for a night's lodging to an hotel blessed with the name of "Hope!" But there proved to be no luxury in the "Locanda Speranza," and, when evening came, methought it were better to have christened it the "Hotel Fleas."

Of the Cathedral of Loreto, this must be said unhesitatingly—that it is a noble building, richly endowed, and happy in having the square in front of it half girt by other buildings that do not dishonour it. Of the City of Loreto, one must confess that it is saturated almost "ad nauseam" with evidences of its exceeding sanctity. The streets are full of ecclesiastics, speaking divers tongues, and wearing a variety of costumes: for Loreto is so noted a place of resort for Catholics of all countries that daily throughout the year confession is heard within the Cathedral in ten or twelve languages. The shops of the

city, like its inhabitants, seem to run in a groove. I walked down a street wholly devoted to merchandise, dependent more or less upon the Santa Casa. The jewelers, for instance, had their windows full of miniatures of the Santa Casa in different metals, for lockets, scarf-pins, sleeve-links, or any other kind of personal adornment. The photographers had been marvellously industrious in the same limited line of work. The very confectioners offered cathedrals and models of sugar; and the other shops were full of tin or chandlery ware having more or less reference to Loreto and the Santa Casa. And while I walked up and down this, the most characteristic street of the town, the bell of the Cathedral sounded ever and anon, to mark the beginning or the end of this function or that, and impressed upon the mind how impossible it would be to live in Loreto without yielding sooner or later to the religious spell which enfolds the place.

I entered a shop to buy some trifle, and of course it was immediately apparent to the shopkeeper that I was a stranger.

"Sir," said he, "it is your first visit to the Holy Place. How happy an opportunity for you! We have just got in a new stock of rosaries of all kinds. You may have a rosary of diamonds and rubies alternately for a matter of twenty thousand francs, or what you please to pay. In any case, you will not think of entering the Santa Casa unprovided with some holy object to be blessed by the officiating Father therein. Such an omission would be unheard of, and so, sir, I beg to direct your very careful attention to all these beautiful treasures in this glass case on my counter."

As it was so evidently expected of me, I bought a pretty rosary of red, blue, and yellow stones, and walked off with it towards the cathedral. The many other dealers of similar objects were rather less polite, however, when they saw me pass their doors, displaying my purchase. It is a sad thing that one can seldom oblige one person without thereby disobliging someone else.

Thus musing, I found myself in the Piazza, before the colonnade of the Cathedral, and in the midst of a most afflicting swarm of the lame, the blind, and the diseased. What a trial are these poor suffering sons and daughters of men to their more healthy brethren! Who can help pitying them at first; and alas! such

is their merciless rapacity and tireless patience, who in the end can help execrating them?

For a quarter of an hour I moved from spot to spot, imploring the poor folks to leave me alone. I had given them all the money I intended to give them; why could they not do something as a return? But no. They dodged and bullied me, until I hurried up the steps of the Cathedral and into the aisle, in a white heat of indignation. On reflection, one wonders how these blind people can see their way so well after the stranger; but perhaps they go by the voices of their friends. As for the lame and the halt, I own I never saw anything to equal the astonishing dexterity with which the one-legged beggars and the cripples on crutches chased me from pillar to post over the flags of the Piazza!

Inside the Cathedral of Loreto one is attracted towards one object solely. Not that the edifice is barren or displeasing. Far from that. It has a large collection of pictures in frescoes and altar-pieces, though certain of them are suffering terribly at the hands of time. Some of its marble monuments are exceedingly ornate. Its sculptures round the Santa Casa are unrivalled works of Bramante and Sansovino. And there is an astounding treasury full of gold crucifixes, rings, bracelets, etc., jewelled offerings, and a bewildering multitude of other valuables.

But all these things are trivial by the side of the Santa Casa itself, which stands under the central dome of the building, to the right of the choir. You do not see it at first; but you are drawn towards it by the number of pilgrims and others who surround and crowd into it.

Priests, in crimson cassocks and exquisite lace embroidery over their cassocks, go to and fro relieving each other in their perpetual labours within the shrine, and engaged in confessing those who wish to present themselves to the Santa Casa unburdened by guilty fears.

A guide soon fastened upon me within the building. As a rule, guides are not welcome to me; but I accepted this man's services, and he led me with some degree of pompous clatter through the groaning penitents, round the Santa Casa and into the Holy Place itself.

"Look!" he said in a whisper, pointing towards the altar, which dazzled the eyes with its blaze of lights, and coruscating reflections from the facets of the

many jewels which gleamed from the altar furniture—"Maria!"

There, sure enough, by the side of the head of the priest, I saw the curious little effigy which goes by the name of the Virgin of Loreto. It is a bell-shaped piece of cedar-wood about four palms in height, the head (or neck of the bell) being carved into the semblance of a woman and a child. No less a person than St. Luke is the reputed author of the work, and he is supposed to have studied it from the life. Accepting this belief, it may be imagined how the worshippers of Loreto feel when they set eyes on this little image, which is gilt and mounted with diamonds, and emeralds, and rubies.

When the French sacked Northern Italy, as they afterwards sacked the whole of Spain, the vast treasure of Loreto did not escape them. They stripped the Cathedral of all its valuables; and, among other things, the Virgin of Loreto, with her diamonds and emeralds, was transported to Paris. From 1797 to 1801 the little figure of cedar wood stayed in captivity like Pius the Seventh himself. But in 1801 the captive Pope obtained possession of it, and eventually returned it to Loreto, with a magnificent apparel of pearls, brilliants, emeralds, and topazes, and it was welcomed with tears of joy by the priests and people. Since then the treasury has been so well cared for by the opulent faithful that, in spite of assertions to the contrary, its wealth can be little less than it was previous to the depredations of the French.

The following are the recorded dimensions of the mere husk of the Santa Casa. It is about nineteen palms high, forty-three palms in length, eighteen in breadth, and two-and-a-half in thickness. The material is a rough kind of tufa, cut in the form of enormous bricks, roughly hewn. On the walls are the traces of some ancient frescoes, in the Greek Church style of art.

It must be remembered that the Santa Casa arrived from Palestine duly provided with an altar. This altar is now enclosed within the large altar at which mass is celebrated many times in the week. Rumour says that St. Peter himself consecrated the small altar, which is some six palms long by five in height.

Besides the altar and the precious figure of St. Luke's carving, there was found in a little cupboard of the Santa Casa a couple of bowls, which were at once

said to be those used by the Holy Family in the preparation of their simple meals. These bowls are kept, carefully mounted in gilt bronze, in a red leather case. Originally they were set in gold, but the French stripped them of that.

In looking over the other treasures of the church I found a curious tablet descriptive of the Santa Casa, the description being in a sort of English, and the work of a Jesuit priest named Cobbington, in the year 1635. I should like to give the whole narrative, it is so curiously written; but the few following lines will be enough:

"The Kirk of Laureto was a Caumber of the house of the Blest Virgin, neir Jerusalem, in the toune of Nazaret, in whilk she was borne and teende, and greeted by the Angel, and thairin also conceived and nourisht har sonne Jesus whill he was twalle year awd. This Caumber, efter the Ascensione of our B. Seviour, was by the Apostles hallowed and made a Kirk, in honor of our B. Ledy, and S. Luke framed a Pictur to har vary liknes thair zit to be seine," etc.

The Jesuit was evidently a Scotchman. Oddly enough, while I was copying this inscription, I was accosted in Hibernian English by a burly young priest, who soon informed me that he was the Confessor of the English section of penitents at Loreto, and, therefore, probably, the generic descendant of the Jesuit Cobbington above-mentioned. This priest talked with me for a few minutes. He had travelled about the world a good deal, was lately from New York, and greatly preferred life in New York to life in Loreto.

"However, what would you have?" he said finally, with a genial heave of his shoulders; and with a merry nod, and expressing the hope that we might meet later in the day, he went off to his confessional box.

To my regret, however, we did not again come across each other; I spent an hour in the evening in trying to find him in the stately chambers, with their old frescoes and carved work, which are the residence of many of the Loreto Fathers on the north side of the square before the Cathedral. I wandered from the nest of one priest to the nest of another, deeply interested in what I saw, but I could not find the Hibernian Father. It was a fine evening: the red flushes in the sky seemed even to colour the cold leaden dome of the Cathedral and the stones of the colonnades; and from an elevated terrace in this range

of ecclesiastical buildings, I could see a multitude of wide-skirted and broad-hatted clergy arm-in-arm, taking the air in the streets of the city and on the battlements beyond, which look over many a pleasant valley, white river-bed, and distant town on distant hill-top, towards the snowy Apennines themselves.

In the meantime, however, I had made another pilgrimage. When I asked my landlord of the hotel "Hope" if Recanati was within an easy walk of his house, he at once, and reasonably enough, assumed that I wished to see Recanati, because there the poet Leopardi was born, and lived most of the tiresome days of his suffering life.

"It is a fine road the whole way, signor," said my landlord; "and yet I would rather that you let me drive you in the little carriage; for the roads are hard and white, and there will be much dust; and the sun will be very hot. Yes, we have much to be proud of, as you say, signor; for it is not every little town of the Apennines that has a Santa Casa and a genius like Leopardi so near to it at the same time. But so it is!"

I declined the carriage and walked to Recanati. It was certainly a hot walk, and a steep one; along the roadsides were vine-yards and much-tortured fruit trees, adapted in the Italian style for the interlacing of the vines. There were grain fields below, set about with similar fruit trees, so that grapes, and pears, and barley might come up from the same patch. Brown men and women were busy with shears and hoes, hoddling and pruning the vines, which already had put forth very many of the tender leaves of hope. Though hot, however, it was cheerful to look over the miles of sunlit hills and valleys, all wonderfully cultivated and bare of large trees, which might else draw off too much of the land's fertility—north, south, and west; with the dusky towns set here and there on the crests of the hills, and the scant river-beds with their long track of whitened stones, trending all towards the near Adriatic shore. For a while the big hill of Recanati—quite covered as to its summit by the sombre town—hid the bulk of the distant Apennines from sight; but as I mounted slowly, the sparkling peaks o'ertopped the foreground, and a superb landscape of Central Italy came gradually to view. It was with these mountains, these rich but unfoliated valleys, these river-beds, and yonder blue Adriatic

constantly before his eyes that Giacomo Leopardi wrote his bitter, sad indictments against destiny and his fellow-townsmen.

Recanati is still a fortified town, as it was hundreds of years ago. One enters the precincts under an enormous gateway, now, bearing the arms of the King of Italy instead of those of the Papal Kings. Instantly the gloom of the dark, narrow streets, with the houses a hundred feet high on either hand, strikes a mortal chill to one's bones and one's spirits. How could a poet live in such a dungeon of a place? one asks oneself.

With much trouble I found my way to the house of Leopardi—Casa Leopardi. The Recanatense speak a dialect of their own, which sounds infamously to strange ears; and for a time all my enquiries fell flat. However I reached the chief square of the town, with municipal buildings and a brand-new stone post-office on one side; a church on the other, dingling a cracked bell as a signal for the procession thence of one of those curious throngs of priests, acolytes, statues, incense-bearers, and devout laymen, which are still common in the Papal States; and shops on the last of its sides. Here, in the middle of the square, which is now Piazza Giacomo Leopardi, stands a statue of the poet, detestable in every way. The ignoramuses of Recanati jeered the young poet while he was alive; called him "pedant," and so forth; sneered when his judgements on matters of taste were in opposition to theirs; but, after his death, they gave him this monument to perpetuate their own imbecility, and christened a street, a school, and a public square after his name!

On my way to Leopardi's house, I wandered into what I thought was the Recanati post-office.

"Have you a telegram for me?" I asked, and offered my card.

"Oh no!" said the clerk, staring; and then with a grin he took me by the arm, led me down a passage or two, and into a room full of books, papers, and documents, and to a table whereat a stout gentleman was sitting with gold glasses on his nose.

A "pother of talk" ensued between the two men. It seemed that I was thus summarily haled before the Sindaco, or Mayor of the town, indicted as a stranger. Certain other officials came in one by one, attracted by the hubbub. The Mayor stroked his face, bowed and smiled at my

every word, and when I stopped speaking and awaited intelligent speech in return, shrugged his shoulders.

And what was it all about? one might ask. Simply this. I had come to Recanati in expectation of a telegram. To the clerk the circumstance was mortally suspicious. To the Mayor, fortunately, after a time, it seemed an innocent business enough; and so it was due to his good worship that I was taken to the post-office and allowed to receive my telegram in due form.

Eventually I reached the gate of Casa Leopardi. Twice on the way I had indulged in coffee at a café. On each occasion the proprietor of the café brought a bottle of rum with the coffee cup, and in a whisper asked if I would not take rum with my coffee. The air of Recanati is, as Leopardi says, so keen and harsh that I suppose the Recanatese cannot refrain from cordials. Under persuasion, I tried the rum, and liked it well.

Casa Leopardi is stately, cold, and grim. As a summer residence it would be agreeable; but arctic in winter, with its outlook at the Apennines, whose breath blows straight upon it. A small piazza is before the house, with the towers of two or three dingy red churches within a stone's throw of the gate. Some inferior houses form the rest of the square, and it was at the windows of one of these houses that young Leopardi, peering from his own bed-room window, used to see the two girlish faces (Nerina and Silvia) which first stirred his boyish heart. A high, white wall forms part of the long façade of Casa Leopardi, and the tops of orange trees and other greenery peering over the wall show that here is the garden wherein the young Leopardis used to play.

The memory of Giacomo Leopardi is magnificently enshrined within Casa Leopardi by the present Count and his family. One sees the suite of rooms which compose the rare old library of the house, preserved as they were when Giacomo spent his days in them. The very tables on which he wrote are as they were—with his inkstand, pen, favourite writing-pad, and so on. But there is, besides, a superb room decorated with rich marbles, and with much upholstery in crimson velvet, which is devoted to the manuscripts, published works, and bibliography of the poet. These are displayed, amid a glitter of brass and glass, in ebony-mounted cases. From the first childish scribbles to the last of his manuscripts,

one sees them all. Knowing the history of Giacomo Leopardi, and the nature of his parents, both of whom survived him, it is easy to animate this old house with imaginative shapes that are not wholly unreal.

PRIMROSES.

Yes, darling, sweet and very gay—
But take your pretty flowers away,
And play with them apart:
Twine yellow posies, fresh and fair,
For mother's breast and sister's hair,
But not for me, dear heart.

Run on, my bonny little child,
And pull more primroses, beguiled
By gracious green and gold.
The wee one leaves me, gay and good,
And wanders down the primrose wood,
The wood I knew of old.

I loved the primrose once, no flower
Like that pale yellow bloom had power
To stir my inmost soul:
She wore it on her maiden breast,
Before the demon of unrest
Her girlish sweetness stole.

For her dear sake my life grew glad:
I loved her, I, a town-bred lad,
A while from taskwork free.
I loved her with a fervent truth,
The first hot passion of my youth—
I thought love answered me.

Another wooed her in the wood,
As in life's April time she stood,
A primrose in her hand.
He whispered low what wealth could buy,
He praised her beauty, fit to vie
With any in the land.

I lost her. If she went to shame
With open eyes—or if it came
Upon her unawares,
I know not: ere the primrose flowers
Had faded in her native bowers,
She left me to despair.

My great wound gaped, and ached, and bled,
And healed. I sepulchred my dead:
Yet April's beam and breeze
Bring with the primrose, flower and leaf,
The memory of my first great grief,
Beneath the budding tree.

Once, once again, I saw her face,
Deep-furrowed with the heart's disgrace,
Deep-scarred with sin and care:
With tattered garments, trembling feet,
She paced the busy city street,
And I—I saw her there!

She held her primroses on high,
To tempt the crowd that hurried by,
Some careless and some wroth;
Poor flowers! like her who fain had sold,
They too had lost their virgin gold—
Decay had marked them both.

A look, a word. Nay, drop the veil;
Poor heart! she lived beyond the pale,
She died at peace with God:
The hope life forfeited, death gave;
Primroses blossom on her grave,
Like stars upon the sod!

FROM HER HIGH ESTATE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

SOMEWHERE in North Germany—no matter where—there stood, and, although much changed, still stands on a dark-red sandstone rock, overlooking a winding river, the ancient castle of Berckenstein, with its square tower, its arched gateway, its moat, and all the other legitimate accessories of a mediæval Schloss.

To have seen Berckenstein in its untarnished glory it would have been necessary to visit it a couple of hundred years ago; but even so lately as the time of Magda von Bercken's early childhood, the ghosts of all its old magnificence haunted it and kept up the traditions of a greatness that had wasted away to a mere shadow.

From her babyhood, Magda had imbibed the idea that the von Berckens had, once upon a time, been very rich and powerful, but that evil days had fallen upon them. There was plenty of testimony to both these facts: the great deserted suites of rooms, hung with moth-eaten tapestry; the faded brocade of the handsome furniture; the ancient mirrors and mouldings, on which the gilding was tarnished with age; the vast stables, where two superannuated carriage horses made the emptiness more perceptible; the wonderful pleasure gardens, laid out in terraces along the hill-side, with the dried-up fountains and crumbling statues; the grass-grown paths and ruined summer-houses; all were eloquent witnesses of a splendid past, to which the embarrassed present might look back, partly in envy and partly in reproach. In point of fact, it was no wonder that the lustre of the von Bercken family was a bygone thing. One prodigal son after another—sometimes three or four at once—had wasted their substance in riotous living, until the family inheritance consisted of little more than mortgages and hereditary embarrassments.

The present Count—Magda's father—had proved true to the tradition of his house, and, after a stormy youth, had found it an absolute necessity to settle down, with his wife and one child, on the most economical footing, in his great feudal castle, which would conveniently have housed a regiment of soldiers.

In the village, which clustered humbly round the castle gates, there were wonderful stories handed down from grandparents

to grandchildren, of the von Berckens: of their handsome faces; of their irresistible wooing; of their lavish generosity; of their dare-devil, harum-scarum escapades; and of their dependents' devotion to them; but the present Count had not inherited the family popularity. He was handsome, it is true, but his face was gloomy and cold; he could not afford to be lavish; and, as to escapades, his day for broadcasting wild oats was gone by, and he was now unwillingly harvesting a large crop, not all of his own husbandry.

Nor was the Countess a favourite. They called her proud; and, perhaps, they were right. Life had been a great disappointment to her, and she had grown bitter and reserved.

As to Magda, when she walked with her old French *bonne* along the stony village street, or sat beside her mother in the lumbering family coach, the old folks would look at her with plaintive head-shakings and say:

"She's a chip of the old block, a real out-and-out von Bercken; and she's the last of them too, unless something very unexpected happens. Eh, isn't it a thousand pities she isn't a boy?"

Which was a sentiment Magda would have cordially echoed. For the child dimly felt that any change in the tedious monotony of her little life would be a change for the better. Her chief occupation was the preliminaries of a polite education, under the care of her old *bonne*, Valérie, and consisted in repeating French verbs and in getting the Catechism by heart. Her play hours, when she could so contrive it—and Magda was fairly ingenious for her age—were spent on a distant terrace in the garden, as far out of Valérie's sight as possible. It was a beautiful place for solitary games. There was an old summer-house, and a fallen statue, and a large bed of tangled violets and anemones; and there had been a wren's nest two years following in a hole in the parapet; but, best of all, it was so pleasant to look down on the mill far below by the river, where there always seemed to be something going on. It was a great amusement to the lonely child to watch from her vantage-ground the many comings and goings to and fro, and to listen to the busy sound of the water splashing over the weir; till one fine day the temptation to go a little nearer proving too strong for her, Magda set off down the hill, and, scrambling through a gap in the neglected fence, found

herself on the rough stone pavement by the river-side.

Once there her curiosity to inspect the mill was forgotten, and she turned her steps up the stream bent on a voyage of discovery. There might be so many wonderful things by the side of a river when one was all alone, without Valérie to hold one's hand and bustle one along. Did not a Princess, once upon a time, find a beautiful baby in a cradle among the tall rushes? And even if Magda failed to light on such a treasure as that, there might be a bird's nest or a nice bunch of forget-me-nots.

Before, however, she had found either, she spied out, sitting on a willow which grew slantwise over the water, a fair-haired, round-cheeked boy, dressed in coarse clothes, but with a certain vigorous grace about him which made him look something superior to a mere village boy. He was deeply intent on a piece of wood, which he was cutting and shaping with his knife, far too intent to hear footsteps, or, if he heard, to raise his eyes in vulgar curiosity.

He was a village boy. Magda saw that at a glance, and, of course, Valérie never let her speak with the village boys; but Valérie was not at hand, and the fair-haired boy looked as if he might make a good playmate, if he would only leave off chipping at his wood and look at her.

Her patience was exhausted before his attention wandered from his work.

"What are you so busy at, little boy?" she called out at last, in the imperious tone of a person who has a right to an answer.

"Hallo!" came back in an unconcerned voice, "little boy indeed! I wonder where you would come in, if I am to be called little."

"But I want to know what you are doing," repeated Magda, a little less imperatively.

"What does it matter to you what I am doing?" he returned, apparently not inclined to make friends.

"I'm coming to sit by you and see," said Magda, making preparations to suit the action to the word.

"You'd better stay where you are; you'll fall into the water and be drowned, and then you'd be sorry."

"I shouldn't fall in. Only perhaps it would be nicer if you came here and showed it me. I can't make out one bit what it is."

"I don't suppose you can. Little girls like you," this with an air of immense superiority, "can't know anything of these things. I'm making a water-wheel."

"A water-wheel? But it's wooden!"

"And why shouldn't it be wooden? Water-wheels are generally wooden—aren't they?"

"I don't know," replied Magda, rather humbly, "I never saw one."

"I told you so!" returned the boy contemptuously, "little girls know nothing."

Here the whittling came to a momentary pause, while the young lord of creation felt in his pocket for another tool.

"Is it finished?" asked Magda anxiously.

"Finished!" retorted the boy; "why, it's just about begun."

"And when shall you finish it?"

"That's more than I can tell you."

"And what will it be for, when it is done—for a plaything?"

"Playing!" he exclaimed, "I should think not. Why, I shall work it."

"Oh," replied Magda, greatly overawed by a boy who would make something which was meant to work, with tools which he carried in his breeches-pockets. "You must be very clever. I should like to see how it works—when it is finished, I mean."

"Well," he returned, apparently mollified by her flattering interest, "perhaps you shall."

Then there was a short silence.

Magda stood very still, and watched the boy's swift fingers fly backwards and forwards.

"What's your name?" she asked at last, "and where do you live?"

"You're a good hand at asking questions, aren't you?" returned the lad, without looking up.

"Well," pursued Magda with perfect good-humour, conversation on any terms being preferable to solitude. "If you'll tell me your name, I'll tell you mine."

"I know it already," he replied unceremoniously. "You're the little lass from the castle; and I'll tell you something else—you'll get a rare wiggling presently for running away from your nurse."

"I shan't, little boy—I mean big boy—truly I shan't. You needn't be afraid of that. I don't care a bit for Valérie; and now if you know my name's Magda without my telling you, it would only be fair if you told me yours."

"Oh, well, Miss Inquisitive, my name is Friedel Beumer, and I live at the mill; and now you had better run away home."

"Not till you show me that thing you are making. Please, Friedel, there's a good, kind boy. It's so dull up in the garden all alone. I don't want to hurry back." And so, after a little more pleading, Friedel allowed himself to be persuaded by the sweet voice and eager eyes, to do the honours of his amateur mechanics.

"You won't understand it, you know," he threw in, by way of a corrective to his condescension. "And if you did, you wouldn't care about it—a doll would be more in your way." And so saying, he began his explanation.

It was full of technical expressions which were unintelligible to poor Magda; nevertheless, she made a great effort, as her sex will do, when it means to rise superior to an implied defect, and the consequence was that Friedel's estimate of little girls received a violent shock.

"I've understood it nearly all," she said when the foggy dissertation was ended, "and I like water-wheels very much; so I shall come down here again and play with you. I think you are a very nice boy."

"That's all right," replied Friedel, feeling unaccountably flattered. "You come here to-morrow afternoon, and then I shall have put the hammer in its place, and you will see what a crank is like."

So Magda's experiment had proved a success, as far as finding a new interest for her lonely little life would make it successful. However, she kept the secret of it all to herself, lest any one should feel in duty bound to tell Valérie or her mother, and so an end should be put to her budding intimacy with the miller's son.

Friedrich Beumer, the well-to-do miller of Berckenstein, was a notable personage among his fellow villagers, for, contrary to the custom of the Berckensteiners, he had gone far afield to seek his fortune as a youth; and thus he knew something of the world that lay beyond the furthest bend of the river and the dimmest distance of blue hill. He had left Berckenstein a very unhappy young man, after the last scene of a sad love drama had been played out. It was the old story, with the old ending, which need not be set down here. It is enough to say that the miller's early manhood had had its trials.

During his absence from his native soil he had shaken off a good many prejudices; and when he returned at the age of thirty-five, to take the place of foreman

at Berckenstein Mill, he excited astonishment, bordering on alarm, by the Red Radicalism of opinions, which he was not in the least careful to conceal. However, though his opinions were undoubtedly shocking to his Conservative rustic contemporaries, his capacity for business was beyond criticism.

The mill thrived; the old miller left all to his care; and at last the miller's only daughter, whose dowry was the mill, won so much of Beumer's heart as remained from the wreck of his early hopes. So after the lapse of a few years he was the owner of Berckenstein Mill, and the most substantial tax-payer of the Gemeinde.

His ambition, so far as concerned himself, was satisfied; it remained to be seen what could be done by perseverance and well-applied efforts for his only child, the boy whose acquaintance Magda had made in spite of rebuffs.

There was no mistaking the lad's vocation. It was the miller's pride and joy to see the spark of aptitude kindling day by day.

"Folks may say what they like, Ursula," the miller said to his wife one sunny Sunday afternoon, as they sat in the garden by the river, discussing the great subject; "they may say what they like, but I shan't bind our Friedel's apprentice to a miller, as I was bound, though here's the mill ready to his hand."

"All the same, it's a fine trade, is a miller's," replied the Frau Müllerin. "I've been used to having millers about me; there was father and grandfather, and the two uncles, and you; and it'll seem odd if the lad isn't a miller too. Besides, as you say, here's the mill and all ready to his hand."

"I don't care," replied the miller authoritatively; "I don't care if there were twenty mills, nor if you'd had twenty fathers and they'd all been millers. The lad isn't cut out for a miller, he's a notch above that; as soon as he can write a good hand and do his sums pretty sharp, I shall send him to school in Düsseldorf."

"I don't hold with sending lads away like that," objected his wife. "It costs a sight of money, and they learn lots of things that are best left unlearned."

"And then," pursued Beumer, taking no notice of this home-thrust, "I shall see if we can afford to article him to a first-rate mechanical engineer; then he must go to England or to Belgium for a couple of years."

"And then?" Frau Beumer had heard these schemes unfolded so often, that it was merely as a matter of form that she said "And then?"

"Then he will be fit to take a good position as inspector of machinery under Government, unless, perhaps, he patents some discovery of his own by which he can make a fortune. And that I think more than likely, for he is always cutting, and contriving, and shaping little models. I'll bet what you like that he's somewhere now, with a bit of wood, and his knife and his file."

"I shouldn't wonder," returned Frau Beumer, "he is wonderfully fond of chipping up wood; but so are most boys; and I've always been used to think of the mill as——"

"Most boys!" interrupted her husband contemptuously. "I should like to see another boy in this country-side who'd make a water-wheel like that one our Friedel was working yesterday. You've got one idea of a man, and that is that he must be powdered over with flour."

So saying the miller rose, stretched himself, knocked the ashes from the painted porcelain bowl of his long pipe, and set off in quest of the incarnation of his ambitious hopes.

"Friedel," he called along the garden and orchard, "Friedel, come here." But he called in vain; no one answered, and the miller sauntered along the river-side, his hands behind his back, and his eyes on the ground, half-forgotten why he had started.

"The lad takes after me," he soliloquised. "He's got a spirit of his own, and he'll have his way; and he won't knuckle under to his mother's fads. I know he won't." Presently he heard the sound of children's voices, and looking up he saw the object of his reverie sitting on the fallen willow with his arm round a little girl.

Both children were intent on a book which lay between them, and from which the little girl was reading aloud; her clear treble voice reached the miller's ear—

"The swineherd, that is, the real Prince—but no one knew he was anything more than a real swineherd—did not pass his time idly. He now made a rattle, which, when swung round, played——"

"Hallo! Friedel!" he called out, ruthlessly interrupting the thrilling crisis. "What are you about?"

Friedel looked up with a shame-faced

blush, though, as a rule, he did not stand in awe even of his burly, determined father.

"Oh!" said Magda, with great composure, "I suppose you are Friedel's father, the miller. He's all right, and we're both being very still lest I should fall into the water."

"And who are you, pray," said the miller, though he knew well enough, "that you should answer when I call to Friedel?"

"I am Magda von Bercken," replied the child coolly, "and I am come down to read Hans Andersen's stories to Friedel, if——"

"Well, my boy," interrupted the miller, ignoring Magda, "I should have thought you had more sense."

"They are not silly stories," interposed Magda eagerly: "if you would like to see what they are about, Friedel shall have the book to take home."

"Take it home yourself!" retorted Beumer, rudely. "We want nothing belonging to the Castle in our house; and who gave you leave to come down here all alone, and to play with a common boy like Friedel?"

"He's very nice and clever, if he is a common boy," replied Magda, hotly; "he wouldn't take me into any mischief, I am sure."

"That isn't the question; it's more your mischief than his I am afraid of." Magda stood indignant and breathless at this. "And now you come along with me. I shall take you back home and tell your Mamselle to keep her eye on you a bit better in the future. Come along."

"Thank you," said Magda haughtily. "I am going home by myself;" and passing the miller's outstretched hand, she went deliberately up the hill-side, and clambering over the broken hedge with as much dignity as she could command, disappeared in the garden. The miller, nevertheless, took his way to the Castle, where he asked to see the Countess herself, and to her unfolded the nature and extent of Magda's delinquencies.

That evening, as the Beumer family sat at their early supper, they were startled by the apparition of a little figure with a tear-stained face, which stood on the threshold.

"Friedel," she said, half-sobbing, and before any of them had recovered from their surprise. "Friedel, I've come to say good-bye. They've scolded me dreadfully for playing with you; it was no use my

telling them how nice you are, because my father keeps on saying that the miller has very wicked opinions. Only I shan't leave off being fond of you, and when I'm grown up we will marry one another, as we settled on Thursday."

The miller laughed loudly; his laugh sounded very unpleasant. His wife looked aghast. She had not lost her reverence for the lords of the soil.

"We will, Friedel, won't we? Promise you won't forget," she urged, drawing a step nearer.

"What?" asked Friedel, trying to look indifferent and succeeding very badly.

"We said we would be married some day. You mustn't forget it."

"I don't think we shall," replied Friedel. "It was only just a game."

Magda cast a despairing glance round. It all seemed too cruel to bear, especially the miller's laughter. She turned to go. Then Friedel, stirred by a sudden impulse, flung down his spoon, and, jumping up, ran to her. Winding his arms round his high-born admirer, he kissed her wet cheek, then pushing her away, said:

"Don't cry; it's only babies who blubber like that: and as to being really married, why, you'll be much too grand."

After this unsatisfactory farewell Magda went her way, heavy-hearted, back to the Castle, and the Beumer family finished their soup in silence; the Frau Müllerin, because her husband looked as if one of his sulky fits were coming on; Friedel, because he was alternately projecting a new and more ingenious employment for his tools, and wondering what became of the Prince who disguised himself as a swineherd; and the miller, because something had recalled the old sad story of his first courtship.

SOUTH AFRICAN SKETCHES.

PIET.

My boy Piet was not handsome. Indeed, to European ideas, his small eyes set obliquely in his face; his wide and flat nose with its distorted nostrils, and the bridge so little elevated that the space between the cheek-bones was almost flat; his protruding lips; and long and prominent, but narrow and pointed chin; might appear positively ugly, notwithstanding the verdicts of the various Hottentot belles with whom he was on familiar terms, and who evidently regarded him with approving eyes.

He was a pure Hottentot, of a type now almost extinct; for though, about two hundred and thirty years ago, when Van Riebeck was Dutch Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, the Hottentots proper numbered more than two hundred thousand, internecine warfare so thinned their numbers and the survivors subsequently intermarried to such an extent with Malays, Kaffirs, Half-castes, and Europeans, that, strictly speaking, they have long since ceased to exist as a tribe. The varieties of the Hottentot proper—that is, the Korannas, the Namaquas, the Griquas, and the Bushmen—live and thrive, but the parental stock bids fair soon to be as utterly extinct as the dodo.

Piet was not hirsute. He had sprouting, at rare intervals on his upper lip, a few hairs, the number of which would not increase if he lived to be a hundred years old; and on his head the small black tufts of wool were sprinkled so sparingly as to permit of a small circle of scalp being perceived around each. His vicinity was unpleasant to the olfactory nerves—he was still less partial to the outward application of water than to the inward—but he was faithful; tolerably honest, except in matters in which food, drink, or money were concerned; less of a drunkard than most of his compatriots; and a liar of but small capacity. He was about five feet four inches in height, and of a jaundiced yellow hue. His age amounted to about sixteen years in actual time; but he appeared to be at least a century old in wickedness and depravity.

He called himself a Dutch Lutheran; but I do not believe he had ever entered a church in his life, and he paid no more attention to the ritual of that creed than he did to its moral precepts. Large-minded and free from bias, however, as he seemed to be upon the subject of religion, I observed that whenever he chanced to come upon a "praying mantis," the insect which his ancestors used to receive with the highest tokens of veneration and welcome as a god, he approached it with a certain amount of deference. He was too civilised, or too sceptical about all things supernatural, to sing and dance round it, as did his benighted progenitors, and he would no more have thought of sprinkling our tent with the powder of the "buchu" in its honour, than he would have of sacrificing two sheep to it; unless they were sheep belonging to some other person, and then only with a

view to a snake-like gorge. Still, he half believed that the advent of the mantis was indicative of future prosperity, and he would not have treated it with disrespect for fear of bringing ill-luck upon himself.

My acquaintance with Piet began curiously. He was one of the drivers of the Diamond Fields transport waggons, and was employed on a stage between Victoria West and Hopetown. He came to us at a farm, some ten hours' journey from the former town, with a span of twelve half-starved mules, which were so wretchedly bad that he and the other driver had to take it in turns to run alongside them and keep them moving by a vigorous application of "sjambok." He would jump out and administer a couple of stinging cuts to each mule, and then, as they broke into a trot, he would spring on to the waggon again. He did this very cleverly some five or six times; but he tried it once too often, and, missing his footing, fell under the waggon, so that the heavy wheels passed over an ankle and crushed it. We of course stopped, lifted him into the waggon, bandaged his ankle with strips of rag damped with "Cape Smoke" and water taken from the collective flasks of the passengers, and then, in order that there might be room enough in the waggon to admit of his lying down, some of us walked on.

At the next farm we reached—some ten miles beyond the scene of the accident—the charitable Boer refused to allow us to leave the boy there, on the grounds that he was "only a nigger." He furthermore expressed an opinion that we were fools not to have left him lying in the "veldt" to take care of himself, and burst into roars of laughter, when he learned that some of us had actually been walking on the boy's account. In consequence, we now had to take the wounded "Tottie" fifteen miles further on, to the next farm-house, where his own master lived; and he had to put up with the pain caused by the jolting of the waggon for another two hours. The distance was too great for any of us to walk, as we should have been left too far behind the waggon; so we squeezed in as best we could, and drove on.

At midnight we reached the farm, and, to our surprise and disgust, the boy's master, an Englishman, only repeated the advice which had been given to us at the last halting-place by the Boer, applying to us, in addition, various uncomplimentary

epithets suggestive of our want of sanity. He had Piet dragged out of the waggon; cursed him for an awkward fool; threatened to have him flogged for each day that he was deprived of his services; and finally announced his intention of turning him out in the "veldt" in a week, should he not have recovered by that time.

We went on again about three in the morning, leaving Piet in the hands of this Samaritan; and the incident was soon forgotten, until about two months later, when as I was sitting with my partner D— outside our little frame tent, on the dusty plain of the New Rush, Piet suddenly dropped upon us, asking for work. He recognised me at once; said that his master had turned him out, as he had threatened to do; and added that, as I had already done something for him, it was my duty to do something more.

It happened that we wanted a cook and general factotum at that time, so we engaged him on the spot; and we never had any reason to complain of our bargain, for he stole far less from us than any other native we ever employed. Of this strange moderation in peculation, however, we of course knew nothing when he came to us; and, indeed, our principal reason for engaging him was, that he understood a little English, a rare accomplishment amongst the natives of the western province of the old colony, who almost invariably speak Dutch. He had probably learned what he knew at his last place; and, though it is true that his English was not very good, it was far better than our Dutch, and we contrived to understand each other without difficulty.

Notwithstanding his scepticism, Piet had prejudices. One evening, after a dusty day's work at the sorting-table, I wandered down a "donga," out by the low hills towards the Vaal, with my gun, to try and shoot a coran or something for supper. I saw no corans, but I shot a hare, some of which we ate, and told Piet that he might have what remained. He was usually voracious enough; but this time he made a grimace indicative of repugnance, and gravely announced that he wanted something else, as he could not eat hare.

For some time he would not tell us what objection he had to that animal, but after much urging he told us the following tradition:

"The moon comes, by-and-by it dies, and then it comes to life again. The moon once called the hare, and said to him:

'Go to men, and tell them that, as I die and come to life again, so shall they also die and come to life again.' The hare went accordingly as he was told, and when he returned the moon asked him: 'What did you say?' The hare replied: 'I have told them that as you die and come not to life again, so shall they also die and come not to life again.' 'What,' said the moon, 'did you say that?' And being angry, he took up a stick, and hit the hare on the mouth, which became slit."

Therefore, according to Piet, no Hottentot will eat hare, because he brought the wrong message, and was thus the cause of death.

The Zulus have a legend analogous to this, but with different "dramatis personæ." According to their version, the "Umkulunkulu," or Deity, sent a chameleon to tell men that they should not die. The chameleon, however, went slowly, and stopped on the road to eat the leaves of a certain shrub. In the meantime, the "Umkulunkulu" changed his mind, and sent the "i'tulwa," a species of lizard, to overtake the chameleon, and tell men that they must die. The "i'tulwa" set out, passed the chameleon, and arriving first at the place where the men were, told them that they must die.

D—— kept a thermometer hung up on a nail which was driven into one of the ridge-poles of the tent, and the mercury in the tube and bowl much exercised the mind of Piet. He asked us frequently what it was for, and evidently regarded our explanations as to the use of the instrument as mere subterfuges designed to disguise the truth, asking:

"What the use of such ting? S'pose I see cloud dis side over dar, den me know rain soon catch dis part, and make plenty cold. S'pose you no able for tell if day hot or cold without dem ting?"

The word "mercury," too, he considered a slang name we had invented to describe the metal in the bowl; and one day, when D—— happened to refer to it as "quick-silver" in Piet's presence, I could see a sudden gleam of intelligence in the boy's eyes, and a pleased expression on his flat countenance, as if he had at last received corroborative evidence of a fact which he had long suspected. Next day we came back from the claim somewhat earlier than was our custom on account of the unusual heat, and when D—— went, as usual, towards the thermometer to see what the temperature was, behold, no thermometer was there!

We, of course, suspected Piet at once, and searched high and low for him. He was nowhere near our tent, but after some time we discovered him at a little distance, crouched down behind a heap of "stuff" near a sorting-table, busily engaged with something on the ground. We approached him on tip-toe, and beheld an amusing sight. Before him on the ground lay the broken thermometer, and beside it, in the dust, was a glistening little silver globule of mercury. Piet's eyes were fastened upon this with a mingled expression of amazement and fright. Every now and then he would cautiously extend a finger and thumb and endeavour to pick up the mercury, which naturally escaped him, and rolled to one side. His action and expression each time he found he had missed it were so absurd, that at last we could not restrain our laughter; he at once heard us, looked round, and the next moment was dancing about and making grimaces at us two hundred yards off.

It was not until the pangs of hunger compelled him, towards the evening, to approach the tent, that we caught him. He expressed contrition, but seemed to think, at the same time, that we had played rather a shabby trick on him.

"What for you tell me that silver live in dem ting for?" he asked. "Why you no say it witchcraft, and then I leff him. That no good silver—not money silver."

Piet pretended to have a great affection for me, and I have no doubt he liked me better than he did D——, for I was far too lenient with him. I went away once for four days to Pniel to bathe in the river and try to become clean, for I had been sleeping in my boots, on the earth, for more than four weeks, and had only been able, such was the scarcity of water, to wash once during that period. When I returned, Piet greeted me with open arms. I asked him how he had been getting on in my absence, and he answered: "Oh, well enough, haas. I cry for you all time. I miss you plenty, and when I no see you, I go smell your coat." If strength of perfume afforded him any satisfaction, he must have got plenty out of that old coat, for it was mud-stained, dirty, and sun-scorched to the last degree.

Some four months after we had taken Piet into our service, my partner and I decided to leave the diamond fields and try our luck at the Transvaal gold diggings. Several causes induced us to come to this decision. The expenses of working a claim

at the New Rush were exceedingly heavy, amounting to at least fifty pounds a month; and, though one might at any time come upon a diamond worth several thousand pounds, which would well repay one for all advances made to fortune, and even make amends for the hard life, discomfort, and hard labour; yet, on the other hand, as had persistently happened in our own case, one might only find, month after month, inferior stones, splints and "boart," which would hardly pay for working the claim. At that time, too, marvellous tales were afloat as to the richness of Pilgrim's Rest in alluvial gold—how one man had hit upon a "pocket" containing nearly four hundred ounces; how another had taken two pounds' weight of nuggets out of the stream in one afternoon, by simply turning over boulders and rocks, and searching under them, and so on.

At all events having worked off and recovered from the diamond fever, we took the gold fever; and it happening that an "up-country" trader in ostrich feathers and ivory was going north through the Transvaal, we sold our claim at the New Rush, and arranged with him to carry our few belongings as far as our two roads lay in common. Everything being completed, we left Du Toit's Pan early one morning and struck into the road which traverses the Middleveld, and leads in a north-easterly direction through a sparsely settled district of the Orange Free State, past Kopje Alleyne, to the town of Potchefstroom, in the Transvaal.

Two days out from Baahof we outspanned in the "veldt" near the Vet River, a tributary of the Vaal, close to a "donga" which contained a few pools of water from recent rains. On these high inland plateaus an astonishingly cold blast whistled over the earth at night, and we gladly huddled round the fire which the "boys" had lighted for us, their own being, as usual, at some little distance; and watched Piet frying some springbok cutlets and boiling the coffee. Our supper over we lighted our pipes, and, wrapped in our "karosses," lay down to smoke and talked. The wind blew colder and colder, and we were all agreed that the situation was most unsatisfactory. If we lay with our feet to the fire, our heads were numbed by the blast; to lie with our heads to the blaze was out of the question; and if we lay sideways, one side was roasted while the other was frozen. Thick as was my sheep-skin "kaross" I soon decided that uncomfortable as was the

interior of the waggon, encumbered as it was with barrels and wooden cases, it would be desirable to seek that shelter. The trader shared my opinion, and we climbed in and disposed ourselves to the best advantage on the angular heap; while D—, who was more luxurious, and objected to any couch harder than the earth, strolled off to a clump of low bushes which grew near the "donga" at a distance of some forty yards, with the intention of lying down under their shelter. Hard as was my bed, the fatigue of the day—for we had walked many miles and had been up since daybreak—soon brought about its natural results. For a few minutes I heard the flapping of the waggon tilt in the breeze, the chatter of the "boys" around their fire, and the yelping of a distant pack of jackals, and then fell asleep.

I had been sleeping for about two hours, when I was awakened by a great squealing and commotion amongst the mules. This was followed by a snarl, which, limited as was then my experience, I had no difficulty in at once recognising as that of a leopard. Taking from the hooks on which it was hung, my gun, a wretched article of Belgian manufacture which I had purchased at Cape Town, and which had the left barrel rifled, I jumped out of the waggon and saw Piet and the other boys busily employed in throwing blazing ox-chips from the fire towards the clumps of bushes whence the squealing and snarling proceeded. It seemed that the mules, being of the same opinion as D—, had also sought the shelter of the bushes to escape the wind, and a leopard, stealing up the "donga," had sprung upon one; for in a few seconds, D— and a crowd of mules appeared on the plain. He told us that he had been aroused by a mule trampling on him; that at the instant of waking, he had seen a leopard spring at the shoulder of the very beast that was treading upon him; that the mule, being knee-haltered, had fallen on him; and that he had escaped from the mêlée considerably the worse for bruises. He dilated upon the cat-like motions and green-glistening eyes of the leopard, and endeavoured to impress upon us that he had had a very narrow escape indeed. We believed as much of this as we pleased, and lighting bunches of rhinoceros bush, went towards the scene of the conflict. The leopard had not, of course, waited to be interviewed; but we found the mule alive, literally kicking, and terribly mauled. It would be of no use for draught

purposes for some weeks, and the trader, filled with fury, vowed that as soon as daylight permitted, he would follow up and settle scores with the enemy. We applauded this resolution, for although we had already on one or two occasions lain out at night to watch for leopards, we had not yet succeeded in shooting one, and we were anxious to establish our reputations.

Immediately after daybreak then, we descended into the "donga." Each of us Europeans had a rifle, and Piet accompanied us with an old fowling-piece loaded with slugs. He was full of confidence, and bragged about what he would do should he come across the leopard. Two of the traders' "boys," both Ama-Swazis, and good hands at picking up "spoor," led the van. The bottom of the "donga" was about fifteen feet below the level of the plain, and about forty yards wide where we entered it. In parts, where the scour had been great, the walls were perpendicular and bare; but generally they were broken up by smaller "dongas," opening to the right and left into the plain.

The two Kaffirs, after a moment or two of hesitation, turned their backs upon the river into which the "donga" discharged, and advanced slowly up the latter. At first, the bed consisted of sand and loose stones, with here and there a tangle of uprooted mimosa and tall Tambookie grass; but as we proceeded, the vegetation became thicker. Our advance was somewhat slow, as each lateral "donga" had to be searched before we could pass its mouth, and at the end of an hour we were still only a quarter of a mile from the outspan. We were moving cautiously along, when a hare leaped suddenly from its form and bolted between D——'s legs, nearly causing him to fire his rifle in his alarm. Piet's face at once became downcast. "Bess for turn back," he said to me, "or some person go die this day." It was the apparition of the hare, the messenger of death to man, which put this idea into his head, and we told him he could go back if he liked; but he seemed ashamed to appear afraid, and followed on.

A quarter of a mile further up the "donga" we were pushing through some tall grass that reached to our hips, when we saw the grass at some little distance in front swaying about as though some animal were passing through it. "Pas op," ("Look out"), cried the Kaffirs, as they threw a handful of stones at the spot where the grass was in motion; and the

next moment, a leopard gracefully leapt over the grass and disappeared round the angle in the "donga." D—— and the trader both took snap-shots as he went, and both apparently missed. At all events, we were now sure that we were upon the right track, and we followed up eagerly. The "donga" had now narrowed to some ten yards in breadth, and the bed was much choked with thorns and rocks, so that we could only move on with difficulty; but there was no exit except the way by which we had come, and we felt certain of our quarry.

After about another quarter of an hour the leading Kaffir stopped, gesticulated to the trader, and pointed towards a ledge of rock which projected from one wall of the "donga," about ten feet from the bed, and which was thickly covered with bush and heath. We could see nothing at first, but the quick eyes of the Ama-Swazi had discovered the hiding-place of the enemy, through a few inches of exposed tail which protruded from the cover. After a few seconds' consultation it was decided that D—— and I should fire at that spot which ought to conceal the animal's body, while the trader reserved his fire in case ours should not prove fatal.

Our two rifles exploded simultaneously, the bushes were violently agitated, a loud screech echoed down the "donga," and before we could think what to do the wounded leopard was amongst us. I threw myself to one side, so as to give him plenty of room to pass me, but fortunately he did not come in my direction. All I could see was a yellowish brown object shoot through the air, and the next moment poor Piet was down on his back and the leopard on top of him. I could hear a horrible crunching and growling, and the hind legs of the leopard seemed to be working like those of a cat when it is scratching up the ground. My right barrel was loaded with slugs, but I could not fire without hitting the boy, and for the same reason the trader was unable to do anything. A sudden movement of the leopard, however, gave the latter a chance; for he at once fired, and with a strange sound, something between a cough and a sob, the animal fell, quivering in every limb. All this had occupied but a very few seconds.

We approached cautiously, for there still might be life in the creature; but he was really dead, and we dragged the carcase off Piet, who was lying underneath. The boy was living, but terribly wounded.

We saw at once that there was no hope. Piet tried to smile as I bent over him, but succeeded but feebly :

"I tell you some person go die this day," he said. "All same that hare, liar hare. He run against the baas, not 'gainst me. Baas proper man for die. Gimme drop o' drink."

And with these words on his lips he died.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcotes*," etc.

CHAPTER XL

THERE was to be a preliminary investigation of the boarding-house—a sort of trial trip—before the travellers finally decided on casting in their lot with it; and for this purpose they set out one day, a week or so after Honoria's departure.

The week had not been lost by Honoria. She had diligently sown seeds of preparation and expectation in the hearts of her fellow boarders, and she had duly impressed the proprietress, Madame Drave, with the wealth of her new clients.

Boarders were divided by this lady into three orders. First and foremost, that rare and delightful creature who takes the best rooms, who pays without murmuring the highest prices, and does not cavil at extras. The only drawback to this charming guest is the circumstance that he is apt to depart with the same sudden unexpectedness with which he came; to take his compliance and his wealth elsewhere. Next in value to what may be termed the Casual Boarder, is the Permanency; the man or woman who pays, if not so well, yet still well, for accommodation of a simpler order, and who may be counted on, summer and winter, to stay. If the Permanency rushes off at Christmas, or Easter, or Midsummer, he takes but a portmanteau with him; he leaves his ornaments and pictures upon his walls; his boots, even his slippers, are left behind, for he is sure to return. With the last hour of his holiday he once more appears. He hangs his hat in the hall; he slips into his familiar seat. The Permanency, who is no lover of change, is therefore well worth securing.

Third in order comes the Cheap Boarder, the boarder who pays scantily, but who eats little, and is content to fare hardily. Sometimes he is a young man who is

absent all day, and who expects nothing but tea on his return; sometimes she is a girl-governess who works equally hard, and whom the stress of life has left with but a languid appetite. Poor Cheap Boarder! banished to the top of the house; deprived of a wardrobe, sometimes of a carpet; stinted in the matter of soap, of hot water, of towels, of blankets; expected to have a taste for none but the plainest dishes; and never, on any occasion whatever, permitted to ring the bell—surely it is but the seamy side of life that is turned towards his melancholy gaze.

Yarrow House, Madame Drave's establishment, held members of all three orders. It was very select; so select, indeed, that there was but one City man in the house, and he was there on sufferance, as it were, occupying a little room not easily let, and also because—if the paradox may be permitted—he was frequently not there, being absent in the interests of silk or tea. A Major and his wife occupied the front bed-room on the second floor, and a literary man and his helpmeet the back. There was also a lady-novelist, who sat with inky assiduity, for the greater part of the day in her own chamber. There was, moreover, the widow of a clergyman who would have been made a Canon if he had lived; and a young man who had means, and luxuriated in idleness, with his name on the books of two Clubs.

In the upper regions there lived by herself a pale young art-student, who gave lessons when she could secure pupils; and a youth who was supposed by those who took the trouble to enquire—but nobody does enquire much about the cheap boarder—to be in a Bank. The glory of the first floor, with its handsome furniture and its high-art decorations, was reserved for Tilly and her uncle.

Miss Walton, who might be regarded as a Permanency, though she lodged a half-flight of steps higher than the Major and the literary man, had a pleasant little room overlooking the street. That street—to be not too precise, in case any particular boarding-house should feel affronted—was Broad Street, South Kensington.

In setting forth the attractions of her house in the daily prints, Madame Drave always mentioned that it was close to South Kensington Museum. The Museum appears to have a particular fascination for boarders; to judge by the advertisements, one would come to the conclusion that they are its chief visitors. She also

allowed that it was near Hyde Park; but this information was generally printed in smaller type, and was for the consolation of the frivolous. In like manner, while the proximity of the station was duly recorded, the plebeian vehicle, the omnibus, was never mentioned in any prospectus of Madame Drave's. Omnibuses are the resource of the vulgar, and Madame's "guests" were all highly genteel. If they did not roll about in carriages, they had friends who did, and when they travelled on the Underground, it was understood that they took first-class tickets.

It was then to this establishment, thus outlined, that Tilly and her uncle were driving, one bright day, shortly before Christmas. They journeyed by way of the Brompton Road, which Tilly immediately recognised. Not a feature of it escaped her; she had thought that it concentrated in itself all the glories of London on that day—so long ago, as it seemed—when she had stepped out of the omnibus at Sloane Street, and had walked towards Mrs. Popham and disappointment.

There was that milliner's with the bonnets which had then seemed tempting, and there—yes, there was the shop where Uncle Bob had courted indigestion by his rash consumption of pie, and where Mr. Nameless had come upon the scene.

For Mr. Burton, too, the quarter appeared to have memories, for he looked about him curiously.

"I seem to know my bearings hereabouts," he said. "Have we been here before, lass? Or, is it only that one street is as like another as two peas? A fellow would need to blaze the houses to find his way about."

"We've been here before," she said, not anxious by too great precision to awaken memories of Mrs. Popham. "I wonder if we have far to go?"

They had not far, as it turned out. Broad Street stands a little apart from the busy thoroughfare, and it looks upon the silence of a garden, green for but a brief summer, but affording a sense of breathing-space even in mid-winter.

Here, from her post by the window, Honoria saw the carriage—an open one—swing round the corner. Two figures were on the back seat, and—yes, on the narrow one facing Tilly, the inevitable Behrens.

"What does he want?" she exclaimed with a little gesture of anger, as she came downstairs to meet her friends. "Is he

afraid to trust them out of his sight for a moment?"

Perhaps the idle boarder—the young man of abundant leisure—was peeping from the dining-room window, while Honoria kept watch above, for Tilly's beauty as well as her uncle's wealth had been rumoured in Yarrow House, and a little thrill and bustle of expectation went through all its floors as the horses were reined in at the door.

The wife of the literary man, who was carefully copying one of his manuscripts, contented herself with wondering and conjecturing; but the widow of the clergyman was met—quite by accident—upon the stair, as the little party was ushered up it. Mr. Burton would not have taken it amiss, for his part, if the entire household had lined the hall to greet Tilly. It was Tilly who came first in his mind. He was in a complacent humour, taking the name of the house—which was emblazoned on the glass panel above the door—as an appropriate compliment to his nationality, and prepared to be pleased.

He shook hands quite cordially with Honoria when she had a moment to spare him from Tilly. As for Mr. Behrens, she gave him but the tips of her fingers to shake.

"Do you want rooms, too, Mr. Behrens?" she asked. "I'm afraid there are none unoccupied that would be good enough for you. You wouldn't care to be banished to the top regions, like poor me."

"Behrens has come to take a look round," said Mr. Burton, answering for him. "Three minds are better than two. And now, whose room may this be?"

"This is the drawing-room, where we all meet in the evening, if we like, you know, and have music, or dancing, or cards. Of course you would have a private sitting-room as well. Oh, here comes Mdme. Drave. Perhaps you would like to talk matters over with her? That would be best, wouldn't it?"

She made the introductions, and then she seized on Tilly.

"Come, and I'll show you the house while your uncle and his mentor are settling things," she whispered, carrying Tilly off, nothing loth.

They went upstairs together, Honoria pausing with an uplifted finger at the first door in the corridor.

"This," she whispered, "is where Mr. and Mrs. Sherrington live. He is literary; writes for the drier sort of journals and

papers. I believe they have two rooms. His wife is just the very best little woman in creation. She does all his copying for him, and she believes him the very greatest genius in London. Listen! he is dictating to her now."

They both held their breath, and in the pause of their silence a deep, melodious, and rather melancholy voice was heard, with more or less distinctness, as the speaker paced the room:

"Alcaics (comma), sapphics (comma), asclepiads of various kinds (comma), are, we venture to think (comma), unwarrantably employed—unwarrantably or mistakenly? Stop, Milly, let me consider."

"What is it all about?" murmured Tilly, puzzled and impressed as they stole away, leaving Mr. Sherrington to settle the important question of expression.

"I don't know," answered Honoria indifferently. "I sometimes think he doesn't either. But he has a good wife and a pretty one too! These are the quarters of Major and Mrs. Drew." She indicated another door. "They call it their bungalow. They also have two rooms; they have their own furniture—camp furniture they had in India. Everything they possess folds up and goes into something else. Very convenient for travelling; but it makes sitting down rather an anxious affair, since you don't know but what your chair may take it into its head to turn into a set of steps or a clothes screen. They are out, I know. I might show you their sitting-room. You would rather wait? Well, perhaps as Mrs. Drew is very proud of her contrivances, it would be better to let her act showwoman herself."

"Oh, here is Miss Dicey!" ran on Honoria, who was in wonderful spirits. "Good afternoon, Miss Dicey; it isn't often one sees you at this hour of the day."

"Well, no," replied Miss Dicey, who was small, and spare, and rather faded. "I'm generally busy; but I find I have to run across to the post. Won't you come in? My room is dreadfully untidy, but still"—she looked at Tilly, who was beautiful enough for the heroine of some romance—"do come in," she urged.

"Wouldn't detain you for the world," said Honoria, lightly. "We know how valuable your time is. I am only showing my friend the house."

"I never saw a person who wrote books before," said Tilly, gazing after the small, active figure of Miss Dicey, as it vanished

down the corridor. "Does Miss Dicey really write novels?"

"Yes, and they're great fun. We all get hold of them; though I don't believe any one in the house reads a word Mr. Sherrington writes, except his wife. This is the last room on this floor, you see, and it belongs to Mrs. Moxon; you met her on the stair? It was just like Mrs. Moxon to be on the stair."

"Who was the young man at the window below?" questioned Tilly. "A young man with an eye-glass."

"Oh, that must have been Mr. Runciman. I believe he must have stopped at home on purpose to see you! He is our ornamental young man; there is a working one downstairs and another in the garret."

"Runciman is a Scotch name."

"I don't think he's Scotch, but I dare say he will be anxious to believe it if you tell him so," Honoria laughed. "Now, come up to my den; I hope it will soon be a very familiar place to you. Yes, it isn't a bad little room—quite as good as I have any right to expect, and some of its comforts I owe to you, my dear."

"How can that be?" questioned Tilly, looking about her.

"The answer is very simple. I recommended you, so I am rather a favourite with Madame at present."

"Is she that sort of person?" Tilly's voice had an edge of disgust.

"She is a just person on the whole, and means to deal fairly, I daresay; but she is human, and a good boarder is worth securing, even at the expense of a little flattery. Perhaps it is mean of me to accept bribes, but poverty makes one mean. This wardrobe, you see, is a better one than usually falls to a permanency. It has two wings and a glass in the centre. One wing and no glass is the usual allowance. And this easy-chair—I never had an easy-chair before; if you don't come, it will doubtless disappear."

"If we don't come, you shall have another to replace it," Tilly said gravely, but she felt uncomfortable. She felt still more uncomfortable, when they went up to the top of the house—that bare region which the young Bank clerk and the young Art student shared with the working housekeeper and servants.

The door of the artist's room was wide open, showing all the poverty and shabbiness of the interior.

"She is very poor, I believe," explained Honoria. "She has a stove, you see,

because that is cheaper than a fire, and she only lights it at night. The young man who occupies the prophet's chamber up that small flight of steps is almost equally poor, I believe. We see very little of either of them."

Of all the house, this upper region was the part that impressed Tilly most. Its poor restrictions haunted her even when she descended and was examining the handsome first-floor suite with her uncle.

"What do you think, Tilly?" he asked, drawing her aside, "here's this room for you to sit in when you want to sew your tuckers or read a story-book"—these were his ideas of a young lady's occupations—"and where I can smoke a pipe now and then and take a look at the papers. And this is your room and dressing-room. No, no, my lass; the other is good enough for me. What do you think? As Behrens says, it's for you to choose. I've pledged myself to nothing; and, if it's a question of a week's or a month's leave to be off with this Madam, that's easy settled."

"But I think it will do very well," said Tilly gravely, remembering with shame that gaunt garret she had just left. "If you think of my room at the Manse, Uncle Bob——"

"Aye, but we've changed all that," he said emphatically. "You're a lady now, my lass, and you must have the best that money can buy."

"I couldn't want better than this. We'll settle which room you are to have later. Perhaps we ought to go now; Mr. Behrens may be in a hurry."

Mr. Behrens did not appear to be in a hurry. He stood with his usual air of grave unconcern while the final arrangements were made and the day fixed for the arrival, and he even found words of congratulation for Miss Walton as they went downstairs.

"You have triumphed," he said smilingly; "it must have given you sincere pleasure that your attractions have, as they deserved, proved irresistible."

"I am very glad to have my friends here," said Honoria tranquilly, sustained by a sense of victory, "but of course I

can't expect to monopolise them, they will make so many new friends! You will be here very often, I suppose, Mr. Behrens! Every day, perhaps! What a pity Madame could not find room for you, to save you the fatigue of coming so often!"

Mr. Behrens laughed, actually laughed, as he shook her unwilling hand.

"I would not for worlds seem to reject your sympathy," he said; "but allow me to reassure you, my dear young lady. Madame could have found room and would have found it, had I wished to try your charming boarding-house."

He left her as she went upstairs with a sense of depression that hardly belongs to the victorious. It was true, and she knew it. This silent, unconcerned Behrens could have been a formidable opponent if he chose. Why did he not choose?

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SATURDAY, JULY 9, 1887.

PRICE TWOPENCE

GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER II.

THE SHEEP REJECTS THE FOLD.

It seemed to Gretchen that she had lived through years of suffering when, at last, some sense of consciousness came back to her.

The room was dark—the fire had long since died out. Her numbed and shivering frame seemed scarcely capable of obeying her will, as with a supreme effort she raised herself from the couch, and dragged her limbs across the room. Her hand was on the door—she had it partly open, when the sound of voices speaking in the hall roused her attention.

Something familiar in the tones of one struck sharply on her senses, and fear, and wonder, and terror quickened her numbed brain into action. She was in the hall in an instant, and facing the two dark and sombre figures who had been parleying with the old serving-woman.

As the light fell on her face and figure they stood as if transfixed, and relief and terror seemed to hold her by turns, as her faltering tongue gave faltering welcome—a welcome that received no response.

The door of the little front parlour was open; lights were there and a fire. Instinctively Gretchen led the way thither, and they followed.

The door closed, and they turned and faced her as judges face an accused and guilty prisoner. Appealingly she stretched out her hands.

"Aunt!" she cried, amazed and fearful.

Then, relapsing into the old, familiar tongue, she went on: "How did you find me? And now, oh, I want you! I want you! You will forgive me, and take me home, will you not?"

But the beautiful, stern face never changed. It seemed as if words would not come. Then the second figure stepped forward, and threw back the long, shrouding veil. It was Sister Maria.

"Oh, miserable girl," she cried, "well may you need us! Dearly have you paid for your folly!"

Gretchen shrank back, pale and appalled. "You!" she faltered.

"Yes; even I. When at last we learnt where you were, I resolved to accompany your aunt to England. Your sin has killed the good old man, whose roof sheltered you. He died, holding your name accursed——"

"Ah, no!" cried Gretchen wildly. "Don't tell me—that; you break my heart."

"It is true," said the Sister relentlessly, "and it is your work. Terrible has been your sin. You are accursed, and a thing of shame and reproach in men's eyes! Nay, do not speak. We know all your miserable tale, down to this day's incident, when the man, for whom you sacrificed your hopes of Heaven, has cast you aside like a broken toy. We have waited and watched for this hour, knowing it would come, as surely as the day brings the sun. Seven months ago you left the roof that had sheltered, the love that had guarded you, the service to which you were vowed. The history of your sin, and of its punishment, is written on your face. You bear its curse within you—a brand of living shame will sear your life, and turn its every hour to misery. Wilful, disobedient,

criminal, so you stand now in sight of Heaven and man—a thing at which the virtuous shudder, and which all men will mock at and despise!”

Like one transfixed, the girl stood and listened to that fierce denunciation. Not at first, not all at once, did its full and terrible meaning flash upon her brain; but gradually a sickening horror, a dull throb of heart and pulse, the consciousness of a secret but recently learnt, stole through her startled mind.

She looked from one to the other of the stern and unmoved faces, and a great fear and terror leapt into her eyes. She sank on her knees and hid her face from sight.

“I sinned, I know,” she faltered; “but it was in ignorance and in love—and Heaven is merciful. It will pardon. Oh, cannot you forgive me too? You do not know what I have suffered.”

“Your suffering,” said her judge, “is but just. As for pardon, it is for you to earn it. The Church you forsook will still open her arms to you, if you turn to her in penitence. The shelter from which you fled will still receive you, if meekly and humbly you confess your sin, and accept its penance. Your shame may be concealed, and its reproach removed; but all the years of your life must atone for it. The world and you have done with each other from this hour!”

Those harsh and condemnatory words stabbed Gretchen's heart with sharp but salutary pain. This self-appointed judge had overstepped the limits of the girl's own consciousness of wrong. Her soul and spirit sprang up in rebellion, and for a moment lent her brief strength and brief forgetfulness.

“I will not go back with you!” she cried. “Aunt is different, I owe her my duty; but to you and your Church I owe nothing but misery! It was your harshness and cruelty that drove me from my home, that left me so defenceless. I will not return with you, or join your Sisterhood, even to hide what you call my shame. I have been cruelly deceived; but my ignorance and helplessness were alone to blame, and they are the faults of my bringing-up. I believed, until to-day, that I was Neale Kenyon's wife. To-day only I have learned the truth, and—and I must suffer for my folly in trusting a man's love and a man's promises. But that is a matter for myself alone. You have no right, and no power, to force me to resume the chains I once so willingly broke.”

“This is blasphemous!” exclaimed

Sister Maria. “Has he, then, made you a heretic, to add to his crimes? Do you know what you are saying? Your folly and disobedience will leave their mark upon all your life. You cannot live that life as other women do. You are shamed, accursed——”

“Oh, hush!” broke imploringly from the girl's white lips. “I cannot bear more; my strength has all gone——”

She broke down into passionate sobs, and suddenly flung herself at the feet of that silent figure with the marble face and burning eyes.

“Aunt! Aunt!” she cried; “say one kind word. Don't you forsake me, too. Think of when I was a little child—happy and innocent; think of how I craved for love and tenderness, and all was cold and blank around me. Don't you, too, say I am lost, and shamed, and beyond forgiveness—if only for my mother's sake; my mother whom I never knew, but who would have pitied me—now!”

What was the change in the calm face? Something, something, surely, as those tear-dimmed eyes looked up to it in their agony of beseechment. A quiver of paling lips, a flush, a tremor, something that seemed to recall to the kneeling girl a dream long past—a dream of when she was a little child.

Involuntarily the proud figure stooped, the arms went out in answering sympathy. There were tears brimming in the down-bent eyes, and then—a chill—a moan almost of despair. The arms fell at her side—empty still. The face took back its marble pallor; the eyes held only anguish, dumb, despairing, as a spoken doom.

“Beware!” said a voice. “Remember your penance!”

Whatever of pity, whatever of softness or remorse had thrilled Anna von Waldstein's proud heart, seemed once more frozen back by that warning. She drew back a step; but as she did so, the girl's overwrought strength seemed suddenly to snap like a bow unstrung. She had borne so much that terrible day, she could bear no more. Without a sound she fell senseless as the dead at the feet of the woman who had repelled her!

CHAPTER III.

“AND I—WHITHER SHALL I GO?”

THE sound of a clock striking the hour aroused Gretchen from what had been a sleep of utter exhaustion after her fainting fit.

She was lying on her bed, covered with some warm wrap. A light was in the room, burning dimly in its shadows. She lay quite still, and tried to recall all that had happened in the space of one brief day. In slow and fragmentary thoughts it all came back, and she slowly rose to a sitting position and shivered as with cold, while her eyes roved restlessly around the room.

No one was there. The house was still as the grave. She wondered whether they had left—those cold and cruel women who had had no pity on her desolate plight, not one compassionate word for her misery. One by one their words came back to her with clearer meaning, with more bitter shame. She leant back against the pillows sick at heart, and tortured by a vague fear that sent the blood in a burning flame to her brow, and made her pulses beat with fitful and uncertain measure.

How had they found her, she wondered, and, having found her, could they, indeed, drag her back to the bondage she had once escaped?

She felt weak and powerless. There was no one to whom she could appeal, save Adrian Lyle; but he was not here; he could not help her now. She must depend on herself. Something must be done, and soon.

It was midnight now. Perhaps in the morning they would be there to force her away; to chain her back into the old slavery. The Church of Rome had a far-reaching hand and a grip of iron. She seemed to feel its pressure once again, and to feel also the old sense of weakness, and powerlessness, and dread.

Desolate, forsaken, unloved, so looked her life as it stretched into vague to-morrows that could bring her no hope or peace ever again. She put her hand to her eyes; they smarted and burned with a weight of tears which, she felt, she must not shed yet. She must act, and act at once. Time enough for weeping by-and-by in the dreary days to come. Mechanically she rose from her bed, and went to the window, and looked out. The night was dark and starless; but she felt glad of the gloom. It would assist her in that scheme which dimly floated through her fevered brain—a tremulous hope of escape and some distant refuge, where she could hide herself from all who knew her sad story, and begin a new life: a life of toil, perhaps, and hardship, but a life that might still bear within it one small element of

hope that should rescue it from utter despair.

She was as ignorant of the world as a child. She had never yet had to trust to herself, or depend on herself. The simple notions and habits of her past life still clung to her, and the only other experience she had attained was from books.

She dropped the blind and went over to the press, where her outdoor clothes hung. The first thing that caught her eye was that beautiful cloak with its bordering of rich fur, that Neale Kenyon had bought for her as his first present. The sight of it was like the ghost of a past happiness. She shuddered and turned away, and took down from its peg a thick, dark cloak of some rough homespun stuff, and a hat of the same. Then she put a few necessities into a small handbag, and took what remained of Neale's cheque—some forty pounds in notes and gold—and placed her purse, for greater security, in the bosom of her dress.

These arrangements completed, she went to her door and softly opened it, and looked out. All was dark and still. With bated breath and noiseless step she crept down the stairs, and so made her way into the little room where Adrian Lyle had seen her that morning. The window opened on to the garden, and she knew she could leave the house by it without making any noise, or risking any discovery. She was now in that strained and excited state only possible to extreme youth—youth in its pathetic exaggeration of sorrow, its magnificent follies, its intensity of despair.

The sense of action, of freedom, of the keen, cold air, the dark and quiet night, gave her a sense also of strength and force. She walked on in the opposite direction to the village, her thought being to get to the station at N—, where she might find a train to a large town which she had heard old Peggy speak of as being some fifty miles or so away in that direction.

Here she would be easily concealed amidst noisy crowds and streets till she could get further away.

It seemed to her distraught and fevered brain that she could never put distance enough between herself and her persecutors. They would be sure to pursue her. They had found her once, they would find her again. She knew now that Bari must have led them to her retreat, and, remembering the insolence and triumph of his face, she marvelled what she had ever done that he should hate her so.

The air was cold and damp, but she hurried on so swiftly that she never felt it. Her eyes wandered in a blank, unseeing fashion over the deserted fields, the long stretch of hedgerows. Before daybreak, however, she became conscious of sudden and overmastering fatigue, then of pain sharp and acute, which turned her sick with terror and paralysed all her strength.

Gradually it dawned upon her that to proceed further was impossible. The intensity of physical pain overmastered every other feeling. She only longed for some shelter, some spot where she could lie down and suffer in silence. She left the road and turned into a narrow lane, and wandered aimlessly on, scarcely conscious of what she was doing. Presently she entered a little wood, dark and damp and desolate enough in the grey dawn of the wintry day. She staggered on a few yards, and then half fell, half seated herself, on the mossy trunk of a fallen tree.

She could not tell how long she had been there when a voice roused her. She looked up, and saw an old withered face, wrinkled and witch-like, before her. In some dim and far-off way a voice reached her ears, but the sense and meaning of it were alike unintelligible.

Then again the death-like throes of mortal agony seized and racked her frame, and with some instinctive appeal from sex to sex, she stretched out her hand to the fierce, strange-looking creature who stood there mumbling and muttering in that strange fashion.

Whether she understood or not, Gretchen could not tell; but she beckoned the girl to follow her, and she rose blindly and stupidly and staggered on over the rough, uneven ground till she reached a miserable-looking hovel, dark, mean, unsavoury as a human abode could well be. Under any other circumstances nothing could have induced the girl to enter such a place; but the extremity of mortal agony which seized her again, overpowered either scruple or consideration. She went in, and the door fell behind her.

It might have been some half-hour after when the full sense and peril of her situation pierced Gretchen's numbed and frozen senses, and the terror of what was inevitable now, added another pang to the fear of discovery.

From the miserable pallet on which she lay she stretched appealing hands to the wretched-looking being, on whom her only claim was that of kindred sex.

"Promise me," she implored, in agonised entreaty; "promise me you will hide me here; you will tell no one—no one whom I am. I have money; I am not poor; I will reward you—only promise——"

The broken words, the foreign accent puzzled the old woman considerably; but as she loosened the girl's cloak and helped her to divest herself of her heavy garments, she found the purse which Gretchen had concealed in her bosom, and that discovery was an argument as effectual as convincing.

"Don't thee fret thyself," she muttered. "I'll tell none o' thee. There, now, do thee keep quiet. I'll do my best, though it's a poor place and naught in it for a lady like thee, so weak and young."

Then Gretchen heard no more, remembered no more; but seemed to plunge into a world of darkness and solitude, alternated by paroxysms of intense suffering that racked physical endurance to its very utmost.

RACECOURSES ABOUT LONDON.

KEMPTON PARK.

It is a fine grassy plain, through which the silver Thames pursues its winding way from Shepperton to Kingston, among rich pastures. In the centre of this region, where it is at its quietest and sleepest, lies Kempton Park, that is quiet and sleepy itself, but that is roused into vigorous and exuberant life at frequently-recurring intervals. To casual visitors, indeed, it seems as if Kempton Park Races were always going on, and it is difficult to avoid the crush in the railway carriages and the rush on the station platforms that attend these gatherings. The crowd, indeed, is better behaved and its language less highly flavoured than is the case at the open race meetings of the period. For Kempton Park is not to be entered except by the payment of half-a-crown, and as there are many rogues and vagabonds, as well as honest men, who are not in a position to put down the necessary coin, the attendance is necessarily, to such an extent, more select.

The notion of establishing an enclosed racecourse, to secure a contribution from every looker-on, is not at all a new one. Someone attempted something of the kind on Wormwood Scrubbs in 1817, but the attempt broke down. A more serious speculation was that of enclosing a course on Notting Hill, named the Hip-

podrome, which was opened in 1837. It happened, unfortunately for the projectors of the enterprise, that some right of way existed over part of the ground, and on the first race meeting on the new course, a mob, taking advantage of a show of legal right, broke through the hoarding that enclosed the ground, and took up a position as non-paying spectators, to the number of many thousands.

The enterprise collapsed at the end of five years of indifferent success. Since then many attempts have been made to turn to a profit the general passion for horse-racing. But little worthy of attention was effected till a strong company, supported by distinguished names and by influential racing men and owners of racehorses, purchased Kempton Park, and made it the home of a club whose motto, "For Sport and Recreation," has been honestly adhered to, and whose success is a notable symptom of a change in the manners and deportment of the age.

There is something interesting in Kempton Park itself, which should not be Kempton by the way, but Kenton, the name given it in the Ordnance Survey, and justly current in the neighbourhood. For Kenton is a contraction of Kenington, a name implying a Royal residence, in the days of the Heptarchy perhaps. Kenington is clearly indicated in the Domesday Survey, under the head of Chenetone. The manor was then occupied by fourteen "villains," honest people, no doubt, in the way of small farmers, who paid their rent in labour and worked much harder for themselves than they did for their lords. Then there were three cottagers, also farming a little land, and two "slaves." And at that time, as well as now, there was a wide expanse of meadows and pastures, equal to five carucates, says the Survey, which may be any quantity, from three hundred to five hundred acres or more. Then there was a vineyard of eight acres, a relic, perhaps, of the days of the Royal occupation, when the King drank the blood-red wine of his own especial vintage. The summers were longer then, perhaps, with more generous sunshine, and the Kenton wine may have had a well-earned reputation.

But Kenton was no longer a Royal seat at the time of the Conquest; it belonged to the King's Thane. Ulward Wit, who perhaps kept a stud farm there, and watched the mares and foals as they cantered over the soft herbage. Presently

there was an end of Ulward, perhaps at Hastings fight, perhaps as an exile and in some foreign broil. Anyhow, a Norman Earl ruled in his stead, no other than Robert of Mortain, of whom, and of his son William, readers of Mr. Freeman's histories will have heard enough. That son rebelled against the Conqueror's son Henry, and in that rebellion lost all his English Lordships, and among them the Manor of Kenton.

The site was pleasing then, as it is now; on one side flowed a gentle stream, bordered by willows and osiers, where often a heron might be flushed, and a hawk might find its quarry. To the south, the deme was bounded by that famous river the Thames; full of all manner of fish, and furrowed by barges with their huge sails, that brought the wines of Gascony, or the rich stuffs of Cyprus, to the very gateway of this noble dwelling. To the north stretched the great forest of Middlesex, abounding in wild game—there is just a morsel left of the old forest at Littleton, between Kenton and Ashford, where everything looks wild and savage as if the land had been untouched since the Conquest, and where the conies friek about in droves.

Here was a dwelling fit for the King, and the King himself being of that opinion, he took it into his own hands and made a Royal Palace of it. And here the Court came at intervals—such a train as may be imagined, with its gleam of gold and steel among the wild woodland glades, with the blare of horns, and the cry of dogs, and the clatter of all the strange outlandish tongues of those who followed the Royal train. And yet it was hardly a stranger sight, and perhaps not more brilliant a spectacle, than Kenton after long ages of a tranquil repose may witness on any racing day. What crowds; what strange tongues; what unintelligible cries; what noble horses; beautiful women; splendid equipages; what soothsayers, mountebanks, jugglers; what crowds of loyal subjects of King Sport!

But between the two Royalties, there is a long gap of something like desolation. When the young King Edward the Third had disposed of the Queen Mother and her favourite in that affair at Nottingham, he took things into his own hands, and began to look up all the Royal possessions which had been neglected in the late slack and uncertain times; among others, Kenton. The report of his surveyors is in existence. There found a great hall, sadly in want of repair, with pantry and buttery

adjacent; and a great chamber, with a chimney ready to fall; and, adjoining, the chapel and wardrobe such as the King had used aforetime. There was the Queen's chamber too, with its chapel and wardrobe, with a chamber called the Aleye; also a house called the Aumery; the larder, and the kitchen, and the grand chamber were still in existence, with a wall about the park, and a still more extensive wall around the whole manor. But buildings, walls, all things, were falling to ruin and decay.

From that time there was no more thought of the place as a Royal Palace. It now became known in the neighbourhood as Cold Kenton. There is something very expressive in such a popular epithet, which embodies a lingering memory, not of a life or a generation, but of centuries. The word recalls the warmth that once dwelt about the place; the hearths once ablaze with cheerful fires of logs; the columns of blue smoke that rose against the background of green wood and into the blue sky; the rich silks and velvets that gleamed about the place; the laughter-loving women and thoughtless youths who haunted the meadows, and to honest Giles and Joan seemed beings of another world. But all this had passed away; the halls were abandoned, the walls laid bare, and the wind whistled through the broken ruins. All this is told in the one word. It is Cold Kenton now, and centuries elapsed before the throng and bustle of the world and its concomitants reached the place once more.

It is a retired nook, even as we see it now, the green course lying in full view from the railway line, the rails and white posts and the stands and balconies reared high in the air. Even the railway is a quite retiring kind of a line, ending abruptly at Shepperton, which is not in the way of being a metropolis; and so for many years a single train ran quietly to and fro along a single line, resting a good deal and never hastening. And this is still the state of affairs between whiles, till the racing tap is turned on every month or so; or when racing is over for the year, it is steeple-chasing, hurdle-racing, or perhaps coursing. Anyhow, a frothy, seething torrent of humanity comes frequently rushing and roaring down into these quiet shades; under every tree along the way sits a three-card trick man, tempting the passers-by to try and cheat him out of crowns; and at every stile the visitors are called upon to purchase correct cards of the races. Special trains are running continually, and long lines of railway

carriages and horse boxes crowd the sidings. There is a special siding, too, which carries some privileged passengers to the very doors of the Club Stand, so that Royal Highnesses and gracious Duchesses can step from the railway carriage to the lawn or balcony, without coming in contact with the crowd; which is considerate for the crowd, for it is they who generally get hustled on such occasions.

And yet only about ten years ago Kenton Park was utterly unknown to the great bulk of the world. It was a quiet country-seat, with little or nothing in the way of traces of its former distinction; indeed, after Royalty deserted the place, it has had few tenants of note. But one of the first acts of Queen Elizabeth on ascending the throne was to grant the manor to Anne, Duchess of Somerset, for her life, she being the widow of that Protector Somerset, who rose almost to supreme power, but fell from it and was beheaded in the reign of Edward the Sixth. It was this arrogant Duke, it will be remembered, who built old Somerset House in the Strand, which takes its name from him—built it out of the materials of the Priory Church of the Knights of St. John in Clerkenwell, and used even partly of the choir of old St. Paul's—and it was hardly likely that any one belonging to him would be a "persona grata" at the Court of the reactionary Mary. But the poor old Duchess, who had probably had nothing to do with all this church breaking, lighted upon better times in the reign of good Queen Bess, and perhaps ended her days among the quiet meads of Kenton Park.

Kenton was still a Royal manor up to the reign of Charles the First, who granted it in fee—for what consideration is not known—to Sir Robert Killigrew, of that Cornish family which founded the town of Falmouth. But no family ever took root there. We come across the names of Grantham, Chardin, Musgrave, as temporary possessors of the manor during the eighteenth century; but these are names only, and there is no record of anything picturesque or striking in their connection with the place.

With some Jacobean mansion planted there; with some Dutch gardener to have dug canals and laid out alleys and lagoons to his heart's content; Kempton might have become as famous as Hampton Court. But this was not to be; its eventual destiny after all was that to which circumstances had best fitted it. It was too flat;

there was too much of it; too much grass and not enough timber to suit an age that had started, à la Syntax, in search of the picturesque.

But as it is, a journey to Kempton on a day when some big stakes are to be run for, is a very enjoyable experience. There is the glimpse of that charming reach of the river below Richmond Bridge, with the boats dancing on the water, and the barges whose masts and sails group so well with the silver-grey of the beautiful bridge, with the luxuriant foliage, the lawns, the rich pastures, the white houses shining among the trees; and then leafy Twickenham, all one bower of shrubs, and trees, and snug-walled gardens; and Strawberry Hill, that suggests Horace Walpole, who would have vastly enjoyed the day at Kempton, with gracious, high-born dames, and lively and honourable misses.

Bushey Park is to the left, with its long, chestnut avenues, and Hampton is reached and passed, and another glimpse of the river can be had, now quite a country stream, flowing pleasantly between low, grassy banks.

Then the racecourse station is reached, and the whole crowd turns out: a motley crowd, drawn from all parts of England—country squires, London stockbrokers, bookmakers from Birmingham, from Manchester, and all the northern towns; and a solid detachment of all the trades of London. This is not a gathering of gamblers; the jolly contented faces you see about you are not those of people who have played their fortunes on the cast. They will be jollier if they win; but not cast down if they lose, as long as they have a spin for their money. Nor can the professional element be called a gambling one; winning is a certainty to the judicious bookmaker, and, when he comes to harm, it is generally by speculating in more hazardous transactions, such as stocks and shares perhaps, or wool, or petroleum.

The green turf spreads invitingly within the jealously guarded enclosure. There are lawns, and flower-beds, and balconies tier above tier. Behind, chimneys are smoking famously, giving promise of hot luncheons and the cheering cup of afternoon tea. It is no cold Kenton this; but zealously warm and hospitable to all its favoured guests; too zealously at times, as when a chimney catches fire and drops a torrent of blacks among the choice milinery of a bevy of ladies fair.

What a buzz, too, about the betting en-

closure! There is no coldness here either. The rails are festooned with the overcoats of the betting men. This is one kind of occupation in which bulk, or height at all events, gives a certain advantage. A little man is lost in the excited crowd, and hence all kinds of contrivances to remedy the defect of nature. A pair of shoes, with soles some four feet thick, are waiting for their owner to step into them; others support themselves on elongated camp-stools; and a favourite device is a black bag, so strong in its framework that its owner throws it on the ground and jumps upon it fearlessly, and offers the odds freely from this coign of vantage.

A bookmaker is nothing without his clerk, who frequently works on shares, and manipulates the big book of the size of a hand atlas, quick of fingers, and as ready and accurate as an electric clock. The business may not be exactly legitimate; but it must be acknowledged that no professional man works harder in his way than the well-established bookmaker.

But while we have been watching the confused turmoil of the ring, arrivals have thickened, drags and carriages are drawn up along the rail. Punctuality is the rule on the modern racecourse, and no sooner does the clock on its turret high point to the hour appointed, than the curtain is rung up for commencement of the play. A race at Kempton Park—to resume the official spelling, which is wrong nevertheless—is like a race anywhere else, “only more so,” as a devotee of Kempton facetiously remarks as he sums up the advantages of his favourite resort. The best mile-and-a-half of turf in the kingdom; some of the best horses of the day attracted by rich prizes; the best company, which goes with out saying. Epsom must take a back seat; Doncaster is played out; Newmarket has only its old renown to trade upon. Here is the future metropolis of racing, say the thick-and-thin admirers of Kempton.

FROM HER HIGH ESTATE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS. PART II.

THE sun was shining down bright and strong on the village of Berckenstein, the sky was unbroken blue, and the mellow summer weather left no ground for complaint, even to the most exacting of grumblers. This was satisfactory under the circumstances, for it was the Sunday of the Kirmesse, the great festival by which the

Berckensteiners reckoned their public and domestic chronology.

All down the narrow street, to the very church porch, there were canvas booths and wooden caravans, gingerbread stalls, lotteries, shooting-galleries, waxworks, a theatre, a menagerie, and a circus; there were crowds of men and women, of youths, maidens, and children; there was a deafening Platt-Deutsch chorus of many voices, blending with the din of many popular tunes played at the same time in different parts of the fair; there was a pervading odour of humanity diversified by whiffs of beer, peppermint, and schnapps.

As yet, however, the jollification was by no means at its height, for though the congregation which had attended early church had already mingled with the throng in the street, a second relay was streaming in through the porch, to hear what the Herr Pastor would have to say in honour of the annual holiday. The church-goers took a long time to wend their way through the many distractions that beset them—indeed, why should they hurry and bustle, as if the Kirmesse was just an ordinary Sunday, and when there were so many greetings to be exchanged with relations, more or less remote of kin, and acquaintances, who had not been visible since Christmas, or perhaps since the last Kirmesse? And after the usual salutations had been given and taken, this special question was, on this particular occasion, almost unfailingly added: "Isn't it wonderful news about Beumer's Friedel?" And if the other were so far out of the world as to be forced to answer: "Why, what has he been doing?" his better-informed interlocutor would continue, that Fritz had found out something wonderful with his machine-making, and that there was a lot about it in the newspapers, and that Beumer said it was a great improvement in electric lighting, whatever that might be. And those who least understood the nature and purpose of electric lighting looked even more impressed than those who did; for the miller had grown steadily richer and more independent with the flight of years, and every one, for a long way round Berckenstein, looked up to him with great respect, modified by a certain shyness of his unusual freedom of thought.

It was not often that the prosperous, broad-built Radical was to be seen at public worship. Attendance at church was one of the links he had broken in

the chain of established habits, during his absence from Berckenstein long ago. But to-day being the Kirmesse, and being rendered doubly noteworthy by his son's recently acquired honours, the miller—instead of his usual dominical inspection of his fields and barns—arrayed himself in his best suit, and condescended to walk a few steps in front of his wife to church.

Friedel—Friedel no longer, but Doctor Friedrich Beumer—had grown and changed mightily since the days when he listened to Hans Andersen's "Fairy Stories" by the river. He was as tall as his father, and strongly built like him; with brown hair; and deep-set, dark blue eyes, beneath a broad forehead. His face was not refined, in the sense of refinement of outline; but it had the refinement which comes from thought, and beyond this a bold nobility and determination which took hearts by storm, through the confidence and faith it gave one in him; and, truly, if a man's self-respect and self-reliance be honest and pure, all honest-minded men and women will share it with him.

Friedrich bore his new honours very quietly; he left all the pride and exultation to his parents, to whom, in fact, the chief congratulations were addressed, since the simple country folk felt shy in presence of this young man, whose name was in all the newspapers, and who was a stranger to them except in name. The miller and his wife stood for some minutes in the porch after their son had entered the church. When they followed him, they saw that he had taken his seat well in front.

"Umph," said the miller in a half whisper, "I'm not going to sit there, Ursula! I'd rather have a place a bit further back. I haven't come to church to get as close to the preaching as I can push."

Just then the wheezy old organ in the gallery raised its voice, and the whole congregation, with one exception, rose to their feet. As they stood respectfully, there walked up the aisle, with stately step and head erect, a tall, aristocratic man of middle age; the expression of his eyes was half melancholy, half bitter, and the lines in his face looked as if he had had his share of troubles. Two ladies followed him: one, a frail-looking woman about his own age, who had never been beautiful, and who looked oppressed and worn; the other, a tall, slender girl with abundance of golden hair, a well-chiselled

face, and a noble carriage; her eyes bent down so that only the white lids and long lashes could be seen. As she passed the seat where Friedrich Beumer sat, he held his breath to listen for the rustle of her gown and the light fall of her foot, while every nerve of his body thrilled with an electric shock from a battery which was well known long before he had taken his road to fame by meddling with dynamos.

When these personages had reached the chancel and taken their places in a velvet-cushioned pew at right angles to the rest of the pews, the congregation meekly resumed their seats—excepting Miller Beumer, who had, of course, remained seated. This was how Berckenstein used, in olden times, to show its respect to the von Bercken family, Sunday after Sunday, in the village church.

Friedrich Beumer's seat had been admirably chosen to command a view of the august group in the chancel—that is, he could have seen each member of it perfectly, if he had chosen. He kept his eyes, however, on the stained glass window just above the Castle pew, with his attention apparently rivetted on the twelve Apostles, who were there arranged in three rows, and docketed with their names emblazoned in a character which defied all attempts to decipher it. But Friedrich was not puzzling himself to decide the identity of Saint Peter or Saint John; he was in truth not conscious of anything except the outline of an oval face, which was considerably below his line of sight. This was not the first time he had come to church for no other purpose than to worship from afar the radiant creature who had taken the place of his little playfellow to whom he had never spoken since he jumped up from his supper to kiss her tearful cheek a dozen years before. Magda would probably, he thought, have forgotten that curious episode of her childhood; and indeed, even for him, it was an insignificant matter. It was not the recollection of that which had drawn his heart towards her, when he had seen her after his first long absence from home. Those few days, spent playing truant by the river, did not count for anything in the fascination which her beauty held over him. Looking on her, he felt that had he but met her by chance in a crowded street, where she had passed by, never to reappear, he must have worshipped her then and there, and for ever after.

To break his reverie, came the hymn.

He slowly moved his eyes from the painted Apostles, and brought them to bear on the book in front of him. He longed to let them rest in passing on Magda's face, but his courage was not equal to the occasion. He kept them fixed on the music through the slow length of six stanzas, straining his ears the while to distinguish the sound of her voice among the scores who were singing round him, all lustily and with a good courage. Then came the prayers, through which Friedrich stood reverently with the rest of the congregation; but the words came to him but as an empty sound. So did the singing of another hymn. At last as he sat down at sermon time, he found courage to give over his contemplation of the long-studied window; and while the preacher was turning the leaves of his Bible to find the text, Friedrich looked at the face he had been covertly watching for three-quarters of an hour, and found it fairer, and nobler, and sweeter than ever. His gaze must have been very powerful, for under its influence, Magda raised her eyes. For one full moment—it seemed to him like an eternity—those eyes met his. Across the short space that divided him from her, he could see into their very depths. They were clear grey eyes, with a line of golden colour round the pupil, which gave them an eager expression even in the most casual glance. He could not remember how her eyes had looked as a child; now they were like stars set in a firmament far beyond his reach; yet that momentary contact with the unattainable, left him longing for another, and so far emboldened him, that he watched her from time to time all through the sermon. But as a German poet whom Friedrich loved has put it, "The sun does not rise twice a day."

At last the sermon came to an end, and the small company of great folk returned to the Castle, and the great mass of small folk went out into the summer sunshine to enjoy themselves and to look forward to the great event of the day, the dance in the evening at the "Golden Eagle."

Berckenstein Kirmesse has almost died out in these days, but the villagers still remember that annual ball when the great barn-like room used to be decked with green wreaths and paper flowers, and flags and mottoes; and when all the good dancers used to come from far and near; and when the Herrschaften from the Castle used to come down in state to open the ball, and how they would stay an hour or so, dancing with the villagers and farmers.

Ah! those Kirmesse balls had been a wonderful dream of bliss to many a rosy-cheeked maiden, who almost doubted the truth of her own memory when she recalled the grace and courtesy of some noble partner who had looked into her unsophisticated eyes. That sad drama, of which the miller's Lieschen had been the heroine, had opened at one of these balls. This may have been the reason why the miller never graced the room with his presence, even after the Herrschaften had departed and left the way for less dignified manners. "He could enjoy his Kirmesse without getting into a sweat over dancing," he asserted bluntly, and no one cared to argue the point with him.

But apparently the newly-made doctor did not feel himself bound by the precedent of his father's example. Towards eight o'clock he proceeded to make a somewhat elaborate toilet, such as he had learnt to make at Berlin, and then took his way towards the "Golden Eagle."

"Outside the 'Wild Huntsman,' the rival inn, sat the miller with a dozen friends and relations, drinking beer out of stone mugs with metal covers and puffing huge clouds of smoke out of their gaily painted long pipes.

"By jingo!" cried the miller, as his son in his town attire came past them. "What's going to happen next? Are those your school-going clothes, my lad?"

A loud guffaw greeted this sally. Friedrich tried not to look uncomfortable.

"Hang it all, man!" pursued his father, "you were fine enough in all conscience before. Why have you put on a fresh suit of clothes?"

"Because," replied the son with a shade of hesitation, "I am going to the ball at the 'Golden Eagle.'"

The miller raised his eyes in blank astonishment, then letting his heavy fist fall on the table so that the metal covers danced on the stone cups, he exclaimed:

"Well! as I'm a living man! Going to the ball! And what are you going there for?"

"I'm going," returned Friedrich, who had recovered his equanimity, "for the same purpose as other people go, namely to dance"—which reason, as will shortly be seen, was not quite true.

For a moment Beumer eyed his son in silence, then he said slowly:

"Well, Fritz, I should have thought your education would have given you more

sense. It's many a long year since a Beumer danced in the 'Golden Eagle,' and if I had my way never a one should again."

But Doctor Friedrich was moulded out of the same metal as his father, so he had his way, and in two minutes more he was standing in a little crowd just inside the ball-room, who were respectfully drawing back to allow the party from the Castle to pass. It was a party of about twenty ladies and gentlemen; for the neighbouring gentry looked on the ball as one of their annual duties to the rustics.

The Count looked even more stately and proud than usual, most likely because he was trying to unbend, which made his hauteur the more perceptible; but whoever noticed this it passed unobserved by Friedrich, for whom the Castle party consisted of one person—the beautiful Fräulein Magda.

While he watched her, the band tuned their instruments, the august persons selected partners, even the sad-faced Countess took a turn at the first dance with the village doctor.

The Count led off the buxom hostess of the "Golden Eagle."

"And who?" asked his Lordship benignly, as he and his smiling partner trod a slow measure together. "And who may that young man be who is standing by that window? I remarked him in church this morning. He seems a stranger to me."

"That, your honour," replied the Frau Wirthin, "is Friedel—I mean Friedrich—the son of Beumer at the mill."

"Ah, indeed," replied the Count, in a tone which, to a practised ear, would have ended the subject.

However, the good woman was more eager to continue to impart what she could than to listen for shades of intonation:

"Your honour does not know, perhaps," she continued, "that it is this Friedrich Beumer who has been making such a wonderful discovery about electric lights. There was a lot about it in the newspaper, which, no doubt, your honour could understand far better than I could; but anyhow, Beumer's Friedel is to make his fortune out of it, and the Beumers are very proud of him."

"Ah, indeed!" said the Count again more coldly than before.

Frau Wolff was disappointed that her news had not made more impression; indeed, when she saw how small an interest the matter excited in a well-bred mind, she began to think that, perhaps, it was only ignorant people who made such a fuss over

the invention of a machine, and that really Fritz Beumer would have had more claim to admiration if he had exerted himself a little to dance, and to talk to the girls, instead of standing there looking as if he thought himself too clever to dance.

Poor Friedrich! He certainly did not look as if the ball were yielding him any amusement. He had taken his place in the recess of a window, and there he remained in spite of the bewitching glances of would-be partners through three successive dances.

He had come to the "Golden Eagle" fully determined to dance with Magda. Two hours ago it had seemed the most natural thing in the world that, when she was stooping to dance with others, he should not be passed over. After having been the hero of the day, he had almost looked on this distinction as his due. But now, in her presence; when he had seen a condescending invitation sent to the Forester Hermann, and to the Farmer Schultz; he felt that between him and his Queen there was a great gulf fixed which no condescension of hers could bridge over. Something of which he had never before been conscious, rose within him, and forbade him to speak one word to her, to touch her hand, or her slender waist, if he might only touch her and speak to her as one of an insignificant crowd among whom she walked for a moment and forgot for ever. And since he could not dance with Magda, he would not choose any other partner, but stood looking rather gloomy and feeling intensely miserable, until, when the fourth dance was about to begin, the innkeeper, Wolff, who acted as Master of the Ceremonies, stood before him:

"Well, Fritz," he said with patronising bonhomie, "why so forlorn, my lad? Will it make you look gayer to hear that the Herrschaften bid you dance this waltz with the noble Fräulein?"

"What noble Fräulein?" asked Friedrich, blushing, but not moving from his place.

"What noble Fräulein?" returned Wolff. "You haven't come back so clever that you can't understand plain language; or is it that you imitate your father's Radical ways? Why, of course I mean the Gräfin Magda, and that you have the honour of a waltz with her."

"Waltz!" stammered Friedrich. "I— you must please excuse me. I do not waltz."

Here the music struck up.

"Lucky for you," cried Wolff. "Listen! It isn't a waltz after all, it is the 'Rheinländer'; so you needn't excuse yourself."

"Far from it," returned the other, who had recovered his balance and was half proud of his own firmness in refusing what he had so much desired; "I should be still more hopeless in a 'Rheinländer.'"

"Then, why the deuce," retorted Wolff testily, "do you come to a ball if you can't dance? Just tell me that;" and he turned away in disgust to his duties.

Two minutes after Friedrich was outside in the cool night air, the strains of the "Rheinländer" floating after him, till the crashing music of the booths drowned them. He hurried through the still crowded street, past the flaring lights, past the dark, silent gateway of the Castle, on under the shadow of the square brown tower, down the steep descent till he stood by the river and saw the golden starlight far down in its bosom. He passed by a willow stump that leaned over the water, and, as he went, the words of an old story came back to him.

"It was certainly rather bold of him that he ventured to say to the Emperor's daughter: 'Will you have me?' But he ventured for all that, for his name was celebrated far and wide, and there were hundreds of Princesses who would readily have said 'yes.'"

And these words that he had heard long ago at that very spot came back again to him like an inspiration and a resolve.

So you see, Friedrich Beumer did not after all dance at the Kirmesse ball.

THE MADEIRA OF THE EAST.

THERE is nothing like war, according to Lord Palmerston, for teaching the nations geography, and it is probable that, but for the repeated squabbles between the Empires of China and Japan, the majority of English people would never have heard of the Loo-Choo Islands. Even now it is not too much to assume that the majority of Europeans could not, on the spur of the moment, give a more definite description of their locality than that they are "somewhere in the China Seas." But as a matter of fact, they are not in the China Sea at all, and, to be strictly accurate, although apparently contradictory, there are no "Loo-Choo" Islands anywhere.

There is a chain of islands which may be said to connect the Island of Formosa

with the southern portion of Japan; and the central links of that chain form a group which is known to the Japanese as Riū-Kiū. The Chinese tongue, which cannot roll off an "R," has made this name into Liū-Kiū, and this again has been Europeanised into Loo-Choo.

There is indeed a tradition transmitted by a Chinese writer, one Li Ting-yüen, who was once sent as envoy to Liū-Kiū, that the islands were first discovered in the Sui dynasty (about A.D. 580), by Chu Kwan, who called them Liū-Kiū, or "the floating dragon," because of the peculiar appearance they present when figured on a chart. But then, as he had no chart and had never seen them thus figured, the story lacks the elements of probability. Otherwise they appear in Chinese records as Liū-Kwei, or the "floating demons"; and by some the present name is understood to mean "the pendant ball."

Now this little group of islands happens to be very interesting geographically, historically, and ethnologically, and they have this additional charm that they have been up till now almost entirely unknown except as a geographical expression, and that an inaccurate one.

We propose, therefore, to gather from various sources what will give the reader a fairly definite and clear conception of them and their idiosyncrasies. Among others we draw upon Commodore Perry's "Voyages"; Dr. George Smith's "Lew-Chew and the Lew-Chewans"; Kaempfer's "History of Japan"; Dr. Guillemand's "Cruise of the Marchesa"; J. J. Rein's "Japan," etc.

The last-named work is a very ambitious one. It professes to give an exhaustive and accurate account of the whole Empire of Japan, in a narrative of travels and researches undertaken for, and at the cost of, the German Government. Yet, Professor Rein has very little to tell of what he, at any rate, consistently calls Riū-kiū. The area of the group he places at one hundred and seventy-one square miles, which seems an unduly low estimate, and the population at one hundred and seventy thousand, in 1883. The ancient Kingdom of Riū-kiū consisted of thirty-six inhabited islands, and it now constitutes the thirty-sixth department of Japan. Some of the islands, Professor Rein says, are volcanic, and some coralline, but as the majority of them are stated to be "both geologically and botanically unknown," he commits himself to no further description than that "the products

of both China and Japan are here cultivated—especially batatas and the sugarcane." The people are Japanese in manners and language, but Chinese apparently in taste, judging from the abundance of pigs. Professor Rein was in Japan in 1874 and 1875, but Dr. Guillemand was not only in Japan, but also in Liū-Kiū, as recently as 1882, so we have something more definite now to go upon—somewhat more as regards their present condition than their past history, however.

The traditions of the Liū-Kiūans can only be regarded as hazy, however circumstantial, when we find that they extend back to the year 16,615 B.C., when two ancestors of their race somehow came into being and were called Omo-mei-kiū. They married and had three sons and two daughters. The eldest son was Tien-tsin, or the Grandson of Heaven, and he was the first King of the Islands; from the second son descended the tributary Princes; and from the third son, the common people. The eldest daughter was called Kūn-Kūn, the Spirit of Heaven; and the second daughter was Tcho-tcho, the Spirit of the Sea. Thereafter the historian becomes confused or forgetful, for the traditions skip over some eighteen thousand years, during which twenty-five dynasties had had their day and ceased to be, and bring us at one step to A.D. 1187, when Chun-tien began his reign, and the authentic history of the islands, which it will be observed, is some six hundred years later than the alleged discovery of the Chinese traveller, Chu Kwan. The main island is only five days' sail from Foo-chow, and it is on record that one of the Emperors of the Sui dynasty, sent an expedition, accompanied by many learned people, to request the King of Liū-Kiū to come and pay him homage. This the King declined to do, whereupon the Emperor sent an army of ten thousand men, who defeated the Liū-Kiūans, killed the King, burned the capital, captured some five thousand slaves, and then returned to China.

This was the beginning of the Chinese connection, which for a long time was a profitable one for the Liū-Kiūans, from a commercial point of view; and moreover, by some strange oversight or favour, they were not called on to pay tribute. But when Chun-tien came to the throne, things began to change. He was certainly Japanese, and is said to have been descended from the old Kings of Japan, but how or

why his family went to Liü-Kiü no man knoweth. Chun-tien taught people to write—in characters borrowed from the Japanese—and the whole tone of the kingdom began to be Japanese.

A century later another Chinese Emperor, recalling the exploits of his predecessor, sent an expedition to regain control of Liü-Kiü, but the affair was a failure. Then came a period of civil war, which split the island into three Kingdoms, after which China stepped in once more, and exacted a tribute, which was regularly paid for five centuries. The three Kings of Liü-Kiü formally declared themselves the vassals of the Chinese Emperor Hong-oi, who advised them to give up fighting and cultivate trade. A colony of thirty-six Chinese families was sent over from Fokien, and Chinese books, Chinese writing, and Confucianism were introduced.

In the fifteenth century the three Kingdoms were once more reunited under one King, to whom the Emperor of China gave the name of Chang, a name retained by the Royal Family of Liü-Kiü even unto this day. By this time there was a tolerably high state of civilisation in the islands, with numerous temples of considerable wealth. A large trade was being conducted regularly from Napha with Satsuma and other provinces of Japan, as well as with China and Corea.

In time the islands became a sort of entrepôt in the commerce between China and Japan, and the King of Liü-Kiü was a sort of permanent mediator in the quarrels between the two great nations. By-and-by, however, when Japan began to cherish the ambitious design of "annexing" both China and Corea, she sought, first of all, to induce the King of Liü-Kiü to acknowledge her supremacy. This the King refused to do, whereupon the Japanese invaded his Kingdom, plundered and burned his cities, and took him away captive.

In the seventeenth century the Chinese again gained the ascendancy; and so, tossed as a shuttlecock between the battledores of the two rival Empires, poor Liü-Kiü fared, until 1850, when the payment of tribute to China finally ceased. In 1879 the Japanese deposed the King, and forcibly annexed the islands; and in 1885, during the Franco-Chinese war, the formal recognition of their sovereignty was granted by China.

Thus we see that Liü-Kiü has both a

long and an eventful history, and has played an important part in the life of the Mongolian nations. The natural attractions of the islands are considerable. The climate is almost tropical; and, as the highest altitude of the hills is some two thousand feet, frost and snow are unknown. The result of the equable climate is that crops can be grown at any season, and, in fact, two harvests of rice are gathered in the year. The vegetation is rather suggestive of the temperate than of the tropical zone, for the hills are covered with pine woods, and the open country resembles in places an English park. Dr. Guillemard says that, while he did observe the pandanus and the camphor tree, the characteristics of the vegetation strongly resemble those of Japan—there being abundance of northern fruits, vegetables, and cereals, lovely nymphæas, hedges of dwarf bamboos, camellias, mallows, and peach trees.

Liü-Kiü has been described as the Madeira of the East, and is predicted as the future health-resort of the Japanese. But even as Cannes has its earthquakes, Liü-Kiü has its typhoons, which blow with tremendous force, and cause great damage periodically.

Commodore Perry was struck with the abundance of limestone in Liü-Kiü. We learn now that this rock is largely used for building purposes and for road-making, and that masses of coralline limestone are found far inland at considerable elevations. Granite, almost white, also exists in quantities, while the promontories round the coast are generally composed of gneiss. The Americans found indications of coral, but, so far as we know, their discovery has never been verified. There are traditions of gold having been found, which appear to be mythical; but as the presents of the Kings to the Emperors of China consisted largely of copper, there is reason to believe that there are mines of that metal in the islands somewhere, although no "Barbarian" has ever learned their locality. The Liü-Kiüans are credited with a remarkable degree of caution in their communication with foreigners.

The land belongs to the Government, who sublet it to an aristocratic class called the "literati," who in turn employ the peasants in its cultivation. These last get only one-fifth of the produce, and the remainder, less expenses and taxes, goes to the landlord. The peasantry, therefore, are very poor, and much of the land is uncultivated, although by all accounts the

islands are capable of supporting a much larger population than they have. A peculiarity of the agriculture is that two crops of the same grain may be growing side by side—the one ready for harvesting, the other just beginning to sprout.

The most important crops are rice, wheat, and sweet potatoes, but peas and beans are also largely grown, as are tobacco and the sugar-cane, the latter being of a small variety. The tobacco leaf seems to be the same as that grown in Japan, but is very carelessly prepared. There are many kinds of fruit and vegetables: including oranges, figs, peaches, and melons, bananas, turnips, pumpkins, onions, etc. Droughts are not infrequent, but an elaborate system of irrigation protects the farmer from their destructive effects. The typhoons he can do nothing to counteract.

In manufactures the Liü-Kiüans are poor. Their textile fabrics and pottery are coarse, and the clothing of the upper classes is imported from Japan; but in pipes, fans, and basket-work they are dexterous; and now that they are becoming so thoroughly Japanned, it is probable that Japanese industries will take root among them.

The Liü-Kiüans have no established religion. The Confucianism introduced, as we have told, by the Chinese, is apparently retained by the upper classes; while Buddhism is favoured by the lower classes. Beecher said they were extremely superstitious; but Dr. Guillemard said he saw nothing to justify such a conclusion. There are a few wayside shrines—stones before which incense is burned and fruit offered, but not in excess.

There are also current tales of fairies and genii, which have a startling resemblance to many both in the "Arabian Nights" and in Teutonic legends. There is, for instance, a story almost identical with that of the Swan-Maiden, as related by Mr. Baring-Gould, in "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages."

The original inhabitants of the islands are supposed to have been of the Malayan race, and the dug-out canoes still in use are analogous to those of the Malay Archipelago. The present language, however, so far as it is known, appears to be closely identified with the Japanese dialect spoken in the province of Satsuma.

According to Dr. Smith, many Chinese terms have been introduced, and the influence of the Chinese colony before mentioned is still seen, both in the language

and in the customs and religious beliefs of the islanders. It is curious that, in writing, the Japanese characters are employed, but in books, the Chinese. In the native phraseology, the Liü-Kiüans call themselves "The Nation that observes propriety."

The largest island of the group is Okiñawa-Sima, but is better known as Great Liü-Kiü. The Archipelago is partially of volcanic origin, and it stretches from north to south over about three degrees of latitude; but is so wholly out of the beaten track of commerce that it has remained so long almost unknown to Europeans. Captain Basil Hall was there some forty years before Commodore Perry, but his visit was a short one, and he has not left anything like so full an account of the place as did the American officer. The latter stayed among the islands for several months, and even concluded a sort of commercial treaty with the Liü-Kiüans.

The island of Okiñawa-Sima is about sixty miles in length and from five to ten in breadth, but the remainder of the group are of very small size. The chief sea-port town is Napha-Kiang, close to the south end of Great Liü-Kiü. The harbour, though small, is surrounded by reefs, and is tolerably safe.

The view on approaching is, according to Dr. Guillemard, decidedly picturesque—Japanese in character, but yet with marked peculiarities, indicating to the traveller quite a new country. On the one side a long battlemented wall guards the entrance to a small river, where a few Japanese junks are berthed while discharging cargo. In front the town is half buried in trees, with the red roofs visible here and there, while a background of low hills completes an effective picture. On the slopes of these hills clumps of bamboos and bananas are to be seen, marking the sites of cottages, while far inland stretch fields after field of sprouting and ripening crops in every stage of growth and every shade of green and gold.

The streets of the little town have an odd appearance; the houses are built within compounds, and are separated both from the street and from each other by massive walls, from eight to fourteen feet in height, of great thickness, and sloping outwards at the base like the old castles of Japan. No doubt they were so constructed for defence in the days when the "Nation which observes propriety" occasionally forgot itself, or was assailed by one or other of its big neighbours.

Passing through a narrow door in one of these bastions, the house is seen built of wood and surrounded by a garden of the true Japanese type : little pebbly paths leading to little bridges over little lakes, lighted by little stone lanterns, with little trees clipped into all sorts of quaint and curious shapes. Of chairs and tables there are none; but the floor is piled with plaited mats of rice straw, lying on which the persons of propriety drink tea out of little cups, and smoke Liü-Kiüan tobacco in little pipes.

The Liü-Kiüans are not a race of giants; they are even shorter than the Japanese, but better proportioned. The peasant class are nearly as dark as Malays, doubtless the effect of exposure, for the upper classes are much fairer, and without any of the yellow hue of the Chinaman. They have, indeed, none of the characteristics of the Chinese, and, while like the Japanese, can readily be distinguished from the latter. Their faces are less flattened, their eyes more deeply set, their noses more prominent, their foreheads higher, and their cheek-bones less marked than those of the Japanese. Their expression is gentle and pleasing, but sad; and this, Dr. Guillemard tells us, is a true index of their character.

Many of the men wear beards, which by some are plaited and fixed at the end into a sharp point, à la cosmétique. Both men and women—rich and poor—dress the hair alike, thus : A small space is shaved on the crown, and the rest of the hair, which is allowed to grow long, is gathered and twisted into a knot over the bald spot, is dressed with cosmétique, and then trans-fixed by a couple of hair-pins.

The metal of which these pins are made varies with the rank of the wearer; the lower classes using brass or pewter, and the "literati" and officials silver or gold, according to their position and wealth. The men are rarely tattooed, but the women decorate their hands on the back in elaborate patterns in blue, traced in Indian ink. The design is begun in childhood, but is not completed until marriage. On the wrist they also tattoo a Maltese cross.

A striking feature about Napha-Kiang, is the number of tombs surrounding it. These are built in the sides of the hills and are of a horse-shoe shape. They are in the form of vaults and are constructed of solid masonry. In these vaults the dead are placed and left for seven years, after which the remains are collected and placed in urns. Those who cannot afford to build a tomb for the use of their own relatives

combine with others, so as to have a common place of sepulture of respectable appearance. The finest, however, are interred in holes cut in the sea-cliffs. After burial, supplies of food and rice-spirit are placed in the tomb for the use of the deceased, which the relatives come and consume after a decent interval. The combings of the hair are collected by the priests, and by them burnt on certain occasions as offerings for some purpose or other; but the meaning of the rite has not yet been disclosed.

Once upon a time, the Liü-Kiüans were famous for producing an extremely hard and beautiful deep rich red lacquer, but the production of this seems to be now a lost art.

Liü-Kiü, says Dr. Guillemard, is Japan just as the Liü-Kiüans are to all intents and purposes Japanese, but it is "Japan, with its grotesqueness toned down, and its stiffness softened by six degrees of latitude. The inner recesses of the harbour are indeed as much like a scene in the Malay Archipelago as anything else, and the little azure-blue kingfisher that flitted out from time to time ahead of us, was by no means out of harmony with it, for the bird is cosmopolitan in its habits, and ranges from Africa to New Guinea, and from Japan to Timor. Passing the wooded islet at the harbour's entrance on our return, we came upon a curious scene. A party of half-a-dozen natives had gathered on the bare summit, and facing toward the west, were occupied in some sort of festal or religious ceremonial. The sun was just setting, but the thick banks of cloud gathered above our heads portended a heavy storm. Bathed in a flood of hard light, a solitary figure stood out against the evening sky, slowly waving his hand and dancing an adieu to the day. Behind him sat the others with snake-skin guitars, chanting the weird, yet not unpleasant, discords of some Liü-Kiüan song. Presently the music ceased, and another stepped forward to take the dancer's place. We floated slowly on, half unconsciously, under the spell of the mournful music and the strangeness of the scene we were watching, until both had vanished in distance, and the fast-fading light warned us that we had better return. The piece was ended, and the curtain had fallen, but among many scenes of travel vividly impressed upon my memory, I can recall few more so than the Liü-Kiüan sun-set dance in Napha-Kiang harbour."

Some few miles inland from Napha-

Kiang is Shiüri, the ancient capital of the Kingdom, from which foreigners are jealously excluded. Both Commodore Perry and Dr. Guillemard, however, managed to go there. This is surrounded by walls of heavy masonry—almost Cyclopean in character—upwards of sixty feet in height, and of enormous thickness. The gate is more Chinese than Japanese in character, being a two-storeyed porch, with upturned gables, and supported on four enormous wooden pillars.

In the centre of the enclosure, and on the summit of a low hill, stand the fortress and palace, within three lines of fortifications—the citadel rising into picturesque towers and battlements. The Palace of the Ancient Kings is now dismal enough, a perfect labyrinth of rooms and corridors in a state of dilapidation, bearing every appearance of not having been inhabited for years. A few miles off, however, is another palace, the summer residence of the King, which is well appointed, amid charming scenery, on the shore of a large lotus lake.

There are other remains of ruined castles and fortresses in the islands, which testify alike to the strength and warlike character of the Liü-Kiüans in the days of old. Now, their King is a captive in Japan, and they themselves are content to be governed by that nation. They are, apparently, not a progressive, but a patient, amiable, and industrious people, who, under a benevolent Government, may develop in commercial importance. There is so much about them and their land which is interesting, that one longs to know more; and in these days of travel, when the "globe-trotter" has exhausted all the beaten tracks, some will be glad to hear of this comparatively unbroken ground.

There is a great deal more yet to be learned about the "Nation that observes propriety," and the undoubted physical attractions of the "Madeira of the East" will, it is to be hoped, induce some competent individuals to go and gather up all the threads of their story.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "The Chilcootes," etc.

CHAPTER XII.

A VERY odd and unexpected thing now happened. When the arrangements had all been completed, and in ratification

of the treaty tea had been drunk, cake eaten, and the good-byes said; when the big door had almost been shut on the smile of their hostess; one last suggestion occurred to Uncle Bob. A suggestion, a doubt, a hint, or a request, it matters not; suffice it, that it took him once more up the steps, and recalled the smile that had been dying from Madame Drave's lips.

Tilly, already seated in the carriage, smiled too; half out of sympathy, half out of amusement. The polite Mr. Behrens waited calmly on the pavement till his friend should be ready to set out. It was already dusk, but the lamp above the hall door threw out a cheerful radiance that lit the strip of pavement where Behrens lounged, and fell on the harness of the horses, on the carriage, and on Tilly's bright face.

The street was very quiet, so that one heard two pairs of feet approaching and voices in talk before their respective owners came in sight—two men walking arm-in-arm in the rapidly-growing darkness, that was all. Tilly looked at them carelessly. As they approached the patch of light, one of them detached his arm from his companion's, and took a step in advance.

"Why, Behrens," he said in a pleasant voice, "who would have looked to meet you here? One doesn't expect to see you beyond City bounds."

"Why not?" said Behrens, accepting the proffered hand. "Is there any law why I shouldn't set foot on your happy hunting ground? I am waiting for a friend of mine."

"So I see."

Fred Temple—for it was he—was gazing at the lovely face in the carriage: a beautiful face, soft, bright, and animated.

"I wonder who she is? I wish Behrens would introduce me," he was saying to himself when, still gazing, he noticed the face change. A flush stole over it; a look of surprised pleasure came into the eyes; the lips parted in a little cry; and then, to his bewilderment, his companion and cousin—his stupid, awkward cousin John—actually went forward, and took in his own hand this beautiful girl held out to him.

There was no mistake about it. When John Temple, sauntering on and awaiting Fred's pleasure, came within the circle of light, Tilly had recognised in his the face of an acquaintance. She knew no reason why she should not greet him as a friend;

for as yet, at least, it was the code of Lilliesmuir by which she set her behaviour. She was frankly pleased and excited over the little adventure. As for John, his feelings may be imagined.

"I am so glad to have met you again—to explain——"

"I have been hoping to meet you," said John, with an equal simplicity, hardly believing yet in his good fortune. "I have looked for you every day."

"We did not go to Mrs. Popham's."

It was this little scene upon which Mr. Burton stumbled, as he came down the steps full of small cares.

"You will see to that, mem," he was saying. "It's very important. I'm glad I remembered it. I——"

"Uncle Bob," came a clear, ringing voice, "please come here! Oh, uncle," Tilly leant forward, and, putting out a hand, she laid it eagerly on his sleeve—"here is the gentleman who helped us the night of our coming here—you remember, who showed us the way! And you were so sorry you could not tell him that we had gone to live somewhere else."

"Ay, ay," cried Uncle Bob, "to be sure, I remember. And my little lass has been fretting here in case you went to a certain place where you wouldn't get anything but the cold shoulder for your pains." He laughed at the well-worn pleasantry. "Well, well," he put out his large hand and shook the other's heartily, "we'll make up for it now. And, like an old fool, I didn't so much as ask your name."

"Temple—John Temple."

"Temple!" cried uncle and niece in a breath, looking wonderingly at each other. Then Uncle Bob continued alone.

"Are you Scotch?"

"I was born in London; but my mother was Scotch. Her maiden name was the same as yours, I believe, Burton."

John's heart was beating thickly; he found difficulty in articulating; he was almost sure now that his conjecture was right; almost sure by the amazed looks they cast at each other; by the eagerness with which they hung upon his words.

"And what might her christian name be?"

"Jessie."

"Jessie!" Mr. Burton repeated dreamily, "Jessie Burton—Jessie Temple!"

"I have reason to believe—though I am not perfectly certain," John went on, controlling himself as well as he could, and preparing to play his last card, "I believe she came from a village called Lilliesmuir."

Now he knew that he was right; knew it by the light that leaped into Tilly's eyes. There was nothing more to fear or dread, unless—horrible doubt!—they refused to own him.

"By jingo!" cried Uncle Bob, waking from a reverie, and slapping his left leg with energy, "this is a rum start! Unless there's some trick here I don't see to the bottom of. You are Jessie's lad, and almost the first man we set eyes on in London!"

Now this conversation was far too interesting, even from the outset, for Fred to maintain the sorriest pretence of listening to the conversation of Behrens. Insensibly he had edged nearer and nearer to the group at the carriage; he now stood close to John's elbow. John, the hero of the hour; John, the despised; taken up by these people, by this beautiful girl, into such a sudden warmth of regard; John, whom nobody ever considered or thought of—here was a strange turn of fortune!

Then slowly, from a word here and a hint there, he gathered that these were the two for whom he had sought so long; that this was the girl of whom he had dreamed, and who had escaped him till she had become indeed but a dream; and it was John who had discovered them—John, who was "Jessie's boy!"

And who, in the name of wonder, was "Jessie," that the old man should speak of her with so strange a catch in his breath? Never before had Master Fred felt so confounded, amazed, so left out.

He had by this time drawn so close, and was pressing so hard on John's elbow, that that good fellow was fain to turn, and, seeing the intruder's eager face, to include him in his own better fortune.

"This is my cousin, and he is a Temple, too," he said.

"So he's a Temple, too," repeated Uncle Bob, in the voice of one whom nothing more will ever have the power to surprise. "Are there any more of you about?"

"I think there are but the two of us," said Fred laughing. "Yes, I'm a Temple, too, and I'm proud if it gives me even a scrap of interest in your thoughts." He looked at Tilly, expecting that she would have extended her hand to him too; but she only gazed at him wonderingly, with no recognition in her eyes. "It's an immense piece of good fortune for me to meet you," he went on, "for I've been looking for you everywhere."

"You've been looking for us, too," said

Mr. Burton with an air of exhausted wonder. "This beats everything to fits. Well, we can't stop here all night. You'll come, both of you, and take a bit of dinner with us, and we'll 'redd' this up before morning, or my name's not Bob Burton. You won't leave us, Behrens," he decided; for that polite gentleman, who had been a silent spectator of this strange scene, was about to withdraw from this odd family gathering. "Nonsense, man, there's room for us all. Sit close, Tilly, and we'll manage."

"We couldn't think of crowding you," said Fred, always spokesman. "If you will give us the address of your hotel we'll join you by train. The station is close at hand; we'll be there as soon as you." And having obtained the information, after a further protest from Uncle Bob, and further polite hesitation, quickly combated, from Mr. Behrens, he actually dragged John away, determined that he should enjoy no superior advantage, though he was "Jessie's son."

On the way to the hotel he extracted every morsel of information that could be drawn from his cousin.

John, plied with questions and adjurations, yielded at last, and repeated the little story in full detail, from his encounter with the strangers in the refreshment-rooms to his own midnight investigations into the family history.

Fred, still struggling with a vague sense of injury, yet felt compelled to laugh.

"That you should find the people I've been searching for all over London! Was it in hopes of seeing them you were hanging about the Popham establishment that night?" he questioned suddenly.

"I understood that they were staying there."

"Well, if you had only spoken up we might have found them ever so much sooner," said Fred with petulance. "I can't think what you kept it dark for."

"I don't see that it can matter so much to you," retorted John, goaded into some show of resentment. "After all, they're not your cousins, and as Mrs. Popham's friendship has waited so long, I suppose it can exist one night longer."

It was herein that the sting lay. It was John, canny, quiet John who was the nephew, and not gay, ornamental Fred. Yet the kinship, if it could be proved, was clearly on the Burton side, and the sole advantage of being a Temple was apparently the distinction of relationship with John.

Here was a nice turning of the tables for Fred, who had always rather prided himself on his good-nature in befriending the silent clerk of Fulham. Had he not that very night, when this strange encounter took place, been on his way to introduce John to all the glories of Mrs. Popham's brilliant drawing-room; the charms of her society; the privileges of her afternoon tea?

Matters took a rather more favourable complexion for the injured Fred when they reached the hotel. Mr. Burton received them alone, Behrens having had the tact to absent himself from this family reunion, and it did not appear from his manner that he was overwhelmed with delight at the sudden apparition of his nephew.

If this pair had been actors on a comic stage, they would doubtless have fallen upon each other's necks and wept upon each other's shoulders; being Britons, and one of them at least a North Briton, they contented themselves with shaking hands rather awkwardly and looking at each other with covert, exploring glances. Mr. Burton had few questions to ask, and John few details to communicate, but these were convincing enough. John produced his mother's wedding-ring, which hung at his watch-chain. Inside the narrow, old-fashioned circle of gold the initials of husband and wife and the date of their wedding were engraved.

"Ay, it's Jessie's ring, sure enough," said Uncle Bob, handing it back after his examination. "I remember her showing me the letters; it was a new-fangled notion in those days—it was little enough of pleasure she got out of life after she wore it. Your father was a bad lot. It was an ill day for her when he set foot in Lilliesmuir—a handsome chap, not like you; you favour the Burtons"—he seemed to find a faint satisfaction in this fact—"a handsome chap with a tongue that would wile a bird off a tree, but a black-hearted villain all the same."

John flushed deeply.

"Whatever his faults, he was my father," he said. "I, at least, must keep silence about him. And if my mother suffered, as I fear she did, her friends, so far as I can make out, did nothing to comfort her."

"She made her bed and she had to lie on it," said her brother, doggedly. "And she was always a proud, high-hearted lass. She would never let on that she had made a mistake."

"And yet my recollections of her are all of a woman whose spirit was broken with sorrow and loneliness."

"Well, well," said Uncle Bob, heavily, waving his hand as if he would dismiss the subject. "How many are there of you?" he asked abruptly.

"Two."

"Boy or girl, the other one?"

"A girl, younger than I. I am twenty-six, and Jessie—she is named from my mother—is twenty-three. She is a confirmed invalid."

"Tilly must go and see her," he said; and that was all.

The interview, in which Fred had shared, keeping a modest silence and holding himself aloof from the two in the embrasure of a window, had some elements of comfort in it for his wounded spirit. And when Uncle Bob, finding nothing more at the moment to say to his new-found relation, strayed to the window, Fred was ready to make himself gracious to the old man, sore with the rough awakening of ill-healed wounds.

"You must be the doctor's son," he said to Fred, looking at him with more favour than he had bestowed on John.

"I am the doctor's son."

"Ah," said Uncle Bob with a half-drawn breath. "I never heard any ill of him."

"I hope you never will!" said Fred, and then—not anxious to be catechised in his turn—he lightly turned the talk. With the tact of which he could be master on occasion, he subtly drew on his host to speak of his roving life and unwonted fortunes. Here was a subject that held no wounding memories, no smart for conscience or heart; a subject that was truly congenial and delightful. The man who among his comrades had gone by the name of 'Lucky Bob,' had nothing but a triumphant, innocent pride in his own gigantic successes; he was ready for the hundredth or the thousandth time to tell the tale anew; to relive his life from its small beginnings to its present pinnacle of glory.

"It was all for the little lass at home," he was saying, when the door opened and Tilly entered.

If the truth must be told, Tilly had refrained from appearing earlier, because of the feminine necessity of making a toilet. The young men had been excused their morning costume; but their reasons did not apply to her, and every young woman, at least, will applaud her, for thus signalling this great occasion. Cousins, and especially

young men cousins, about whom one has woven pleasant imaginations, are not to be met and hailed, and taken to the family bosom every day; and surely one ought to take a little trouble to show that one wishes to be friendly and is pleased? If it had been the six young women Temples of her fancy instead of one young man—or was it two young men?—perhaps Tilly would not have lingered quite so long at her glass, or so questioningly asked it if she were really pretty, or if it were a fond delusion of dear old Uncle Bob's? If she had any fear on this point, the looks of both young men ought to have reassured her. She had chosen her dress with some care and with nice discrimination to suit the occasion, not too dowdy, nor yet too gorgeous; but if her only object had been to set off and adorn her own fairness, she could not have succeeded better. It was a gown of pale blue—the colour, as every one knows, for fair hair and cheeks of the wild rose—and it hung about her in soft and sinuous folds, which showed off all her slim grace.

The cousins looked at her with delight and admiration; John jumped up from his chair, and Fred sprang forward to fetch her another. She took neither, but stood smiling between the young men.

"You are my cousin. My cousin John Temple," she said to the one. "You and my uncle have settled that satisfactorily, I hope, and put it beyond doubt?"

"I think so; I hope so."

"I am glad," she said simply.

"And you," she turned to the other, "are you my cousin too?"

"I must be," said Fred eagerly. "I don't see how there can be any doubt about it. This fellow is your cousin, as we have just conclusively proved, and he is my cousin also, therefore what can be plainer than that you and I are cousins as well? That is sound logic, isn't it?"

"I don't know anything about logic," said Tilly smiling. "I am afraid the fact only amounts to this—that you are my cousin's cousin."

"But in Scotland, I understand that is considered quite a near tie."

"But we are in England."

"I see you won't own me," said Fred with melancholy. "What shall I do to qualify myself, Miss Burton? I am sure if you would allow me, I could make out a case."

"Oh, I won't hinder you," said Tilly, smiling frankly. "I never had any cousins till now, for what is the good of having

them if you don't know them, or anything about them? My uncle, it seems, was a Temple."

"And he was my father's brother." Fred had never before in the course of his life felt anxious to own this reprobate kinsman's claim.

"But then it is after all on the Burton side that we are related. Your mother—" she looked at John.

"My mother was a Burton — your uncle's and your father's sister."

"So you see," she appealed smilingly to Fred.

"No," he said with gay defiance, "I don't see, and I won't see. Let us leave the matter for to-night, at least; let us stop short at the Templea."

"Very well." Tilly glanced at her uncle, still standing with his back to them, lost once more in the past as he stared unseeingly into the darkness. "To-night we shall go no further; we shall leave the genealogical tree in doubt, if you like. After all, it was the Temples I always wanted to meet, and hoped to meet, when I came to London. And now I want to hear about them," she turned to John, and this time she took the seat he again silently offered.

"Do you know what I made up my mind to expect, when I met my cousins?" she asked.

"No," he replied, smiling. There was another chair near, and he leaned his arms on the back of it and looked down at her. "Will you tell me?"

"Confound him, with his easy, intimate air!" said Fred to himself. To see John adopting his own manner before his own eyes was too much for this jealous young gentleman.

"Well," said Tilly, "I reckoned on six girls. Am I right or wrong?"

"Wrong by five," said John, laughing.

"There aren't eleven?" questioned Tilly, in a voice in which politeness and dismay struggled together. "Eleven girls! Why, it must be like a school!"

"There is only one," said John, "there never were more than Jessie and me; and she, poor girl, has a struggle to keep in life at all."

"Is she ill?" Tilly asked with sympathy. "I am sorry. Will she not get well?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Dear me," she said; "when I thought of those six Temple girls, I always fancied them very big and strong—great walkers and riders, and all that. And now it is I who will have to take care of this poor little cousin of mine. And you?" she turned suddenly to Fred, who was listening moodily.

"I have nobody," he said, "not even a charming sister Jessie, like this fortunate fellow here; but I have one little claim which I am bold enough to press, Miss Burton, my friendship for a lady who is a great friend of yours—who is thinking of you at this moment, and longing to hear of you. I am afraid she would never forgive me, if she discovered that I had spent a whole evening in your company without letting her know that you were found."

"A friend of mine?" said Tilly, looking puzzled. "I know no one here except Miss Walton, and she knows where to find me."

"Have you forgotten Mrs. Popham?"

She looked at him steadily, flushing a little, and then her glance wandered to the window where her uncle still stood silent, his gaze absently fixed on the hurry of the gas-lit street; his mind busy with old scenes, long forgotten.

"We do not know Mrs. Popham," she said in low, but clear, tones. "It is a mistake. She is not a friend of ours."

She got up with that, and crossed the room, and going up to the old man at the window, she put her hand within his arm, and leaned her cheek for a moment in mute caress against his sleeve. It was a pretty action, because it was so spontaneous and unconscious. She had forgotten that they might be looking at her.

"Aren't you getting hungry, dear?" she said.

He looked down on her with a start, and repeated with an effort:

"Hungry? Yes, to be sure; there are these two young fellows and Behrens—" he turned round, and becoming, at last, fully alive to their presence, he said to John, with a nod, "You just ring and hurry them up, will you? I ordered something for ourselves downstairs."

Unlucky Fred! by what malign chance had he blundered? His dinner was spoiled for him before it was eaten.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
CUPID'S COUNTRY DANCE	1	"UN BAL DE M-CAREME"	27
THE BED THAT COULD NOT BE MOVED.	11	A LITTLE GREY CAT	45
CHRISTINE LA BARBE	19	THE KNELL OF KNOCKMASH	52
HIS HEART'S DESIRE	29		

CUPID'S COUNTRY-DANCE.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

And folks, who ne'er have danced before,
Can dance in Cupid's Alley.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

FIGURE ONE.

LEADING COUPLES ADVANCE.

"It's annoying—very. Difficult to understand—rather," said Sir Peter Witney. Here he shuffled together a small packet of letters that the morning's post had brought him, every one of which contained a refusal of his polite invitation to spend a week or ten days at Witney Hall. "But, after all," he added after a moment's pause, "it's their loss, not mine. Don't you agree with me, Miss Miles?"

Three days previously, when Sir Peter was sending out his invitations, this lady had had a somewhat different remark addressed to her. Then it had been: "It's a happy thought of mine to give my house-warming at Easter, when everybody's glad to run away for a few days into the country. Don't you agree with me, Miss Miles?"

To which question Miss Miles had replied then, as now: "Exactly, Sir Peter; I was just going to make the same remark."

For, the past fifteen years of her life, during which period she had filled the double capacity of lady-housekeeper to Sir Peter and governess to his orphan ward, one-half of this worthy lady's duties had

consisted in repeating this formula at least a dozen times in as many hours.

"Their loss, not mine!" Sir Peter went on irritably, evidently bent on working himself into what Miss Miles was accustomed to call "a state of mind." "Now I should like to know who, of all those people who have seen fit to refuse my invitation, keeps a better stud than I do, or has a better cook in his kitchen, or can put better wine on his table—eh, Miss Miles?"

"Ah, I should like to know, indeed."

"Or who among them could put his hand in his pocket and pay thirty thousand pounds down on the nail for a country house, then pull it down and rebuild it from top to bottom? Eh, Miss Miles?"

"Or furnish it when it was rebuilt; that means another thirty thousand pounds, pictures included, eh, Sir Peter?"

Sir Peter was mollified. His house was his pride and his hobby. To build it, to furnish it, and to lay out its spacious grounds to the best advantage, had taken every spare minute of his time since, five years previously, rejoicing in his civic baronetcy, he had sold his City business and settled down as a country gentleman in the green plains of Buckinghamshire.

"A famous hunting country—I shall be able to give you a capital mount whenever you like to run down," he had said to his City friends, when he had purchased his estate. They were friends, by the way, as little likely to mount a hunter and follow the hounds as Sir Peter himself. If it had not been for Sir Peter's only son, Leo,

and his friends, the hunters would speedily have fallen victims to apoplexy.

Leo was a genial, good-hearted young fellow. He had been to Harrow and Oxford, and drew friends around him by the score. As he drove them home from the station in his dog-cart, he was in the habit of admonishing them somewhat in this fashion:

"Now, if you want to get into the governor's good graces, just address him as 'Sir Peter' as often as you can get the name in. Also don't fail to ask him how much he gave for his house, and what it costs to keep the stables going. And be sure to speak of me at least once a day as his successor to the title—that shows, do you see, we're none of your paltry City knights—and the governor will decide you're one of the best of fellows going."

But Sir Peter's ambition flew higher than Leo's friends, and aimed at filling his house with Leo's friends' fathers, and mothers, and uncles, and aunts. They were not so easy to get at, however, and in response to Sir Peter's invitation, written in Miss Miles's best hand, there had come a succession of refusals. "Thanks—regrets—previous engagements."

"We'll not discuss—a—these letters at lunch, Miss Miles," Sir Peter went on to say, as he carefully tore them into small morsels before committing them to the waste-paper basket. "Leo has an unfortunate habit—you may have noticed it—of passing blunt remarks upon my friends which I do not approve of, before the servants." Which remark, it may be noted, was Sir Peter's manner of expressing the fact that Leo had an unfortunate habit of seeing the ridiculous side of things, and that, no doubt, he would not neglect the opportunity of making capital out of twenty-two refusals arriving by the morning's post.

"Ah, Leo was always a spoilt boy," said Miss Miles deprecatingly.

"Sometimes I think it would be as well that he and Fan should marry and settle down without farther delay," the old gentleman said musingly. Which remark, it may also be noted, was Sir Peter's method of expressing the fact that sometimes Leo's fun was a little too much for him.

Miss Miles was thoroughly of Sir Peter's opinion long before luncheon was over that day. The meal began badly. Leo settled himself comfortably at table between pretty Fan and stout Miss Miles, with her non-descript features, neat grey hair, stiff silk gown, and fluttering lace lappets.

"Let me see," he began, looking up and down the length of the table, "we shall want at least three yards more of mahogany let in here next week, when our numerous and distinguished friends begin to arrive. Or will you have the table turned into a T, father, and let Royalty, as represented by the Lord Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace who are coming, sit with you at the upper end?"

Sir Peter was seized with a sudden fit of coughing, and grew very red in the face.

"It's the curry. Cook must have put in whole pepper instead of cayenne," suggested Miss Miles apologetically.

Leo turned to the butler:

"Saunders, take a message from me to the cook. Say that next week, when the Lord Lieutenants and the Justices of the Peace sit down to our table, whole pepper is on no account to be put into the curry instead of cayenne. Don't, Miss Miles, my feet are tender. You must have double-soled boots on."

This, in acknowledgement of Miss Miles's unseen though vigorous efforts to put him to silence.

"They're not coming," roared Sir Peter at him between his fits of coughing.

"Never mind, the message can go down," continued Leo calmly. "We shall have a trio of General Officers and a brace of Colonels at least, and they're uncommonly particular about their curries—especially when they get upon the Retired List. Ah, take care, that'll go the wrong way." This was addressed to Sir Peter, who suddenly seemed seized with a fit of thirst, and was taking long and frequent draughts from his glass of claret.

Sir Peter cleared his throat loudly once or twice.

"I should condemn that claret—it's acid—before the distinguished on the Retired List arrive. They're just as particular about their claret as they are about their curries," Leo began.

"They're not coming," again roared Sir Peter at him, and then he set off coughing again.

"I knew it would go the wrong way," Leo went on calmly as before. "Don't try to frown at me in that threatening manner, Fan. A frown isn't your style at all. You can no more frown than you can flirt."

Now to tell a pretty, blue-eyed, golden-haired damsel that a frown sits awry on her face is no insult. But to imply that flirtation would come equally amiss to her, is to cast a slur either upon her capabilities

or upon the use she has made of her opportunities for distinguishing herself.

Fan gave a quick upward look into Leo's face, which said as plainly as words could say it: "Give me the chance, and—you'll see."

But her lips said nothing. Sir Peter was at that moment to have his innings. The afternoon post, just then brought in by Saunders, among other missives brought one with a crest—a stag's head surmounted by a coronet. Sir Peter pounced upon this letter at once, read it through at first hurriedly, expecting that "compliments" and "regrets" would, as before, greet his eye; complacently a second time, when he found that two out of his many invited guests had accepted his invitation; and triumphantly the third time, when he felt that Leo's eyes, Fan's eyes, Miss Miles's eyes were turned expectantly in his direction.

He cleared his throat.

"The Earl of Exmoor and his daughter, the Lady Joan——" he began pompously.

"Good goodness, where are we going now?" Leo ejaculated.

"Have much pleasure in accepting my polite invitation for Easter week."

"Is that the Temperance Earl, who conducts the Bands of Hope about the kingdom, and has started a League for boycotting public-houses?" asked Leo.

"Saunders," he called after the retreating figure of the butler, "when the Earl sits down to our table next week, take care that a decanter of toast-and-water is always at his Earliship's elbow, and on no account offer him either sherry or champagne."

"There's my peacock come for his dinner," said Fan, jumping up from the table, and taking with her a plate of fruit and bread-crumbs to the long French window, where stood the brilliant bird pecking at the glass.

Leo followed her.

"Fan," he whispered, as in turns he helped her feed or tease her pet, "when we two are married we won't live in a big, staring new house like this"—here he glanced somewhat contemptuously at the sumptuous furniture and decorations of the spacious dining-room—"but we'll just creep into a comfortable little cottage. Ten rooms and good stabling is all we can possibly want."

And Fan demurely assented that "ten rooms and good stabling" were all that they could possibly want.

At the self-same moment Sir Peter and Miss Miles, still seated at table, were discussing the same event. The father's eye

followed the son and intended daughter-in-law with not a little pride. Leo was not a son to be ashamed of. It was matter for congratulation that Sir Peter had not transmitted to him his own short, thick-set figure, small eyes and nose. Leo, no doubt, got his height, his curly chestnut hair, and dark expressive eyes, from that girl-mother who, five-and-twenty years ago, had been laid in her grave. A little sadness shadowed the father's look of pride as he turned to Miss Miles and said:

"When Leo and Fan are married, the house will seem very dull and quiet."

"Exactly, Sir Peter; I was just about to make the same remark."

"Leo has told me right out that he means to have a separate establishment. Well, it's no use fighting against the inevitable. The better plan is to look it fairly in the face, and see what one can do for the best."

Miss Miles looked up at him enquiringly. His tone of voice seemed to imply that he was leading up to something that had to be said. Now Miss Miles had her own idea as to what ought to happen when Leo and Fan were married. Could it by any possibility coincide with Sir Peter's at the present moment? Her heart went fluttering.

Sir Peter's next words made it flutter faster.

"Now many men in my position, dreading a lonely life, would make fools of themselves and marry the first young girl they could get to have them; but I'm not likely to do that, eh, Miss Miles?"

Miss Miles felt all her colour go into her face. The table was a long one; she was seated half-way down, so she raised her voice to answer.

"At your time of life! I should think not, indeed, Sir Peter."

Sir Peter drew himself up with dignity.

"At my time of life! I'm not an infirm old man. I hope—only just the other side of sixty! Do you mean to say you think I'm too far on in life to marry again, eh, Miss Miles?"

"I! Good gracious, no!" cried Miss Miles energetically. "You are younger than many men are at fifty. Why, I've known men at eight-and forty look older than you. Try some of this jelly, Sir Peter. You've only made half a lunch, what with Leo's fun and the letters coming in."

Here Miss Miles took possession of the jelly dish, left her place at the table, and, seated in Fan's vacant chair, proceeded to help Sir Peter.

Fan looked mischievously over her shoulder at the two.

"I believe she's making love to him," she whispered to Leo.

"Let's leave her to it," whispered Leo back. "Poor old dear! she has warmed his slippers and laughed at his jokes for the past fifteen years; I don't see why she shouldn't do it for another fifteen years if she's so disposed. Come out for a drive, Fan; it's a heavenly day." So the two left the room together.

"As I was saying," Sir Peter went on between his morsels of jelly, "I'm not likely to make a fool of myself by marrying a miss in her teens."

"They are so flighty—think only of dress, and flirtation, and dancing."

"Well, it isn't so much what they do think of, that I find fault with, as what they do not. Now a man at my time of life likes to have his tastes and likings considered in his meals——"

"Ah, many a good night's rest it has cost me thinking of what I should order for the next day's luncheon or dinner," put in Miss Miles softly.

"Exactly; but one would hardly expect a girl, say of seventeen, to lose a night's rest with thinking over the next day's dinner. But, you see, when they're turned——"

"Forty-five?" put in Miss Miles. She had stopped at forty-five five years ago.

"Well, I don't think they need be quite so far on as that."

"Ah, he thinks I'm younger. I'll be forty-two next time, he asks my age," thought Miss Miles.

"But, after all," Sir Peter went on, "it's a question of character as much as age. Now a woman of a kind, affectionate disposition, with——"

"A talent for housekeeping," suggested Miss Miles.

"Exactly; and an even temper, may make every whit as good a wife at thirty years of age as another at forty without those desirable qualities. No more jelly, thank you, Miss Miles. Now, will you be kind enough to go into the library and fetch me the 'Peerage'! I've a very strong reason for wishing to find out the age of the Lady Joan." . . .

FIGURE TWO. PAS DE COUR.

"The old order changes, the plutocracy is paramount; we must bend to the new order of things," the Earl of Exmoor had

said to his daughter when he wrote his acceptance of Sir Peter's invitation. "This man holds all the mortgages of my Buckinghamshire property, and within a year he can foreclose unless I pay up arrears. It's of no use, Joan, you must give up Eckersley and all thoughts of love in a country vicarage. This Sir Peter Witney is a widower. You understand what I mean, I hope, without my having to go into details. You had better write to Eckersley; put it as kindly as you can, but make him understand that it will be better for you both that your engagement should come to an end now."

Lord Exmoor had succeeded to his title, and a heavily-encumbered estate, somewhat late in life. He was a man of great personal dignity, with manners, people and that were not only starched, but well-ironed, they were so smooth, and polished in their stiffness. Years ago some one had told him he greatly resembled making due allowance for discrepancy in years—the Emperor of Germany. Ever since then Lord Exmoor's stateliness had become more stately, his seriousness more serious, and he had gone in largely for big schemes for benefiting "the masses" by means of Temperance Leagues, tracts, and tea-parties.

Lady Joan was a dutiful daughter, with a great respect for her father's whims and wishes. But her love for her lover must have outweighed her respect for her father, for she said to herself as she gave orders for her boxes to be packed, "I won't write to Eckersley till I come back from Witney Hall, and, oh, dear! I do so wish this Sir Peter Witney were a widow instead of a widower, so that father could make him the Countess at once, and so settle his affairs for himself."

Sir Peter awaited the arrival of his distinguished guests with not a little trepidation. At first he had said to himself, after he had received the acceptance of his invitation, "Now it was a capital idea of mine to get an invitation into the Earl's hands through his lawyer's by means of mine. I'll get the notification of his visit into all the leading papers here, and then I'll like to know who will dare turn up his nose at me, and call me Old Rabbit-Skins."

But as time went on, and the day of arrival drew nearer, his courage began to ooze. "I wish I knew a little more how they carry on in aristocratic circles," he soliloquised, as he smoked his cigar over

his morning's paper. "Now Leo could give me a good many useful hints if he liked; he has stayed in ever so many good houses, and knows all the ins and outs of fashionable life. But if I ask him for a word of advice it'll just set his mischievous brain going, and he'll tell me the Earls and the Countesses go to bed in their coronets and bangles, and such like nonsense. I know I shall have to take the Lady Joan in to dinner every night—that I'm quite sure about. And I remember Alderman Bury—he has passed the chair and knows all about these things—saying that colloquially the title of Earl is dropped, and so I suppose I must address him as Lord Exmoor. Ah! and there's another thing—I remember Bury told me—that I was to be sure and receive my guests myself if they were at all distinguished. Now I've forgotten where he said I ought to stand to receive them; whether it was at the foot of the stairs, or at the head of the stairs, or at the inner hall door just behind the butler. I must think it all out and arrange the details carefully. A first impression is everything, and I wouldn't like the Lady Joan to think that one must be born with a handle to one's name to know manners."

So it came to pass that when Lord Exmoor and Lady Joan stepped from their carriage on to the door-step of Witney Hall, two "match footmen," gorgeous in bullion and crimson plush, stood one on either side of the doorway, a serious-looking man in black stood behind them, and another serious-looking man, also in black, behind him.

The first two individuals Lord Exmoor passed without a look, to the third he gave his name, at the fourth, who was occupied in making a very low bow, he stared blankly.

"Ah, a house steward, perhaps," he said to himself; "or they may have a way of keeping two butlers in these new houses, goodness only knows."

The bowing individual bowed again, backing as he went towards the door of one of the reception rooms. "Delighted to see you, my lord—Lord Exmoor," he said with every bow he made. But as his words were spoken with his face very much downwards, the Turkey rugs which covered the hall had the benefit of them, not Lord Exmoor.

"That will do, my good man," said the Earl, as Sir Peter's last bow landed the party well within the comfortable library.

"Now will you go and tell your master I am here?"

Sir Peter straightened his back, grew crimson in the face, took out his pocket-handkerchief and rubbed his forehead hard.

Lady Joan was too quick-witted not to see her father's mistake, and too kind-hearted not to try to atone for it. She threw a good deal of warmth into her greeting of Sir Peter, and began talking very fast about the pretty country road they had driven down on their way from the station.

Fan came forward to be introduced, Leo followed.

"Blunders will arise," said the Earl, as he gave two fingers to the young man. "I was mistaken once for a man very much my inferior in station—a commoner, in fact."

Leo put his chin on a level with the Earl's grey hair.

"Ah," he said, "a worse thing happened to me! Once I was mistaken for an aristocrat! I nearly shook the life out of the man who made the blunder."

The Earl stared at him for a moment. Then he turned to Fan, and in dignified, courtly fashion began to question her as to her pursuits and likings, and the way in which she passed her time in the country.

"The women in this class of life are generally superior to the men," he said to his daughter later on in the day, when he found himself alone with her. "That young fellow with the clownish manners will never get beyond his father's tanyard."

Dinner that night was a dreary affair. Sir Peter was very ill at ease. Dinner had been ordered "à la russe," in order to give them leisure—as Sir Peter had explained to Saunders—for conversation. Well, the leisure was there, but the conversation was not. Lady Joan was tall, pale, and slender; her neck had a peculiarly graceful bend to it; she appeared to be always leaning towards you in a listening attitude. "She looks like a snowdrop on a frosty morning," thought Leo, as he seated himself opposite to her at table. "She'd make a capital listener, if there were anything to listen to." Fan did the greater part of the talking. She came out in a manner which surprised, and did not altogether please, Leo. She chatted away to Lord Exmoor as if she had known him all her life. "It was to make up for your cross looks," she explained to Leo afterwards: "and really I do admire his quiet."

dignified way of speaking, and the courtly manner he has of showing you attention. When he picked up my fan and presented it to me, it was a positive act of adoration. He bent so low that it took him a good three minutes to get his back straight again."

"Ah, that should be laid to the account of his rheumatism, not of his politeness," said Leo ill-naturedly. And then he went off by himself to his "den," and did not go near the drawing-room that evening until five minutes before bed-time.

That five minutes was five minutes too much for him. As he entered the room his eye lighted upon Fan, seated beside Lord Exmoor on a sofa facing the door. Fan was an authority upon palmistry. She was carefully scrutinising the Earl's thin white hand, which lay between her two pretty plump ones.

"Yours is a beautiful hand," he heard Fan saying as he entered. "Your fingers are in exact proportion to your hand—neither too long nor too short. Your forefinger inclines to the left—away from your thumb—that means generosity."

"Don't forget, Fan, that spade-shaped thumbs mean villainy," said Leo as he passed. And as he said it he devoutly hoped that the Earl owned to an indubitable spade-thumb on each hand.

Then his ear caught a remnant of his father's talk. The drawing-room at Witney Hall was superb alike in its dimensions and decorations. Sir Peter, side by side with Lady Joan, was making the round of it. A stranger might have thought he was showing her the pictures. Leo knew better. "I wonder how often women wish they had the right to tell men to go to Jericho," he thought as Sir Peter's words fell upon his ear.

"This Lincrusta Walton," the old gentleman was saying, "which forms the dado of this room, cost me exactly double what it costs anybody else. It was made to my order, and has three times as much gold-leaf on it as that supplied to Royalty. And this curtain," here he picked up a corner of the satin curtain which rested on the floor, "cost every shilling of twenty-five guineas a yard, that means fourteen shillings and sevenpence an inch!"

Miss Miles, in solitary grandeur, sat in a big arm-chair beside the fire. Her hands lay in her lap, her untouched embroidery beside her. She was conjugating her pluperfect tense a little sadly, not a doubt. "I might have been, he might have been, we might have been—so happy!" Leo

could read in the lines and puckers of her forehead and mouth.

He nodded his good-night to her and vanished.

FIGURE THREE. PAS DE COQUETTE.

EASTER WEEK was a wet one that year. Now a wet week in a big country-house is a fine test of character, more especially if that country-house is but scantily supplied with guests, and those guests are but scantily supplied with amusements. People develop into the good or the evil geniuses of the community in exact proportion to their capacity for "keeping things going." Leo's talents in that respect seemed suddenly to have come to a halt; it was Fan who showed herself to be the good fairy of the family. Lord Exmoor seemed to be particularly fascinated by her pretty, demure ways and bright flow of fun. Lady Joan, to Leo's fancy, seemed to lose no opportunity of throwing the two together. Sometimes it would be, "That lovely water-colour drawing [you showed me yesterday! Will you mind my father seeing it!]" And then the Earl would spin out a succession of stately compliments to Fan over one of her sketches. Or it would be, "That sweet little song that you sang to me this morning! May I fetch my father to hear you sing it?—he adores music," and then the compliments and smiles would be exchanged over the grand piano.

Lady Joan, with thoughts still full of that cherished country vicarage—and its vicar—saw possibly a way of reconciling duty with the wishes of her heart, by a marriage between the impecunious Earl and the ward of the prosperous holder of the Buckinghamshire mortgages. "It would be every whit as good as my sacrificing myself to the rich old widower," she thought. "He will be sure to be lenient to us, no matter whether he becomes father-in-law to my father, or my father is father-in-law to him! And oh, what a load off my mind!"

It should be stated that Lady Joan, though she set to work with a will at her plots, and took care to keep her father's mind at rest by encouraging every one of Sir Peter's attentions to herself, was yet withal an innocent plotter. Of Leo and Fan's engagement to each other she knew nothing.

Leo had never yet acted the part of a jealous lover. It was quite a new experience for him to be perpetually haunted

with a desire to lock up Fan in a cupboard, or to trip up the old Earl as he came downstairs in the morning with slow and stately step.

Sir Peter only threw, as it were, a cursory glance at his aristocratic guest's flirtation with his ward.

"Of course there's nothing in it," he said to Leo—upon which Leo muttered a gruff "so much the better for him." "And," Sir Peter went on to say, "of course it's an absurd thing for a man at his time of life to be making eyes at a young girl like Fan. If he could only have seen himself last night bending over her, and turning over the leaves of her music, for all the world like a young fellow of five-and-twenty! I spoke to Fan afterwards, and asked her how she could allow him to make himself so ridiculous, and her answer was that 'she liked it.' Now, Leo, can you tell me what she meant by that? I'm quite at a loss."

Leo professed himself to be quite at a loss also.

"One thing is clear," Sir Peter went on, "the man can have no sense of humour, or he wouldn't make himself a laughing-stock in this fashion."

"Ah, if he were not so thick-skinned he would have seen the admirable manner in which you took him off last night," said Leo.

"I took him off!"

"Yes, when you crossed the room—so—on the tips of your toes, with Lady Joan's teacup in your hand, and presenting it with a low bow, assured her your Dresden felt honoured by the touch of her lips."

Here Leo reproduced Sir Peter's little pantomime of over-night.

Sir Peter grew red in the face. "Bless my soul! I did nothing of the sort. My attentions to Lady Joan, I assure you, are offered in all seriousness, and are—are quite another thing."

"Oh, no doubt. Quite another thing."

"In the first place, there's a considerable difference between my age and his."

"I should think so, indeed! Eighteen months if there's a day!"

"Eighteen months! There's a good three years' difference, at least. What do you mean by eighteen months? And, in addition, there's a considerable difference between Fan's age and Lady Joan's. I say, Leo," here the old gentleman's face grew conscious and rubicund, "what should you say to Lady Joan for a step-mother, eh?"

He enforced the question by a dig in Leo's ribs, and an odd little noise which certain jovial old gentlemen are in the habit of making when the joke they relate is a good one. It seemed entirely composed of k's, and recalled nothing so much as the subdued explosion of a cracker between the back teeth.

Leo was startled, but he did not show it. "A mother-in-law!" he repeated. "Oh, well, I suppose she's young enough. I dare say she's about two or three-and-twenty."

"Two or three-and-twenty! She's turned twenty-five! I've looked her out in the 'Peerage.' Now, don't you think it would be a capital match for me to make; wealth on my side, rank on hers; mortgages comfortably adjusted for the good of the family; the county generally making a rush at me for introductions to my wife and my wife's father! I say, Leo," here the old gentleman's voice dropped a little, "I do wish the father were a little less of an icicle, though—I can't get at him. I wish he would drop a little of his stiff, starched manners in the home circle!"

"Do you call him 'stiff starch'?"

"Well, I don't know what else to call that poker-up-the-back way he has of coming into a room and taking a chair. You haven't noticed it! My dear boy, what have you noticed, I should like to know, if you haven't noticed that?"

"The impression he gives me is that of a man who would like to be genial and free-and-easy, if you'd only let him."

"If I'd only let him!"

"Yes, I mean it. If I were a stranger in the house here—didn't know you, I mean—I should certainly say to myself, 'Now what has that poor old Earl done that Sir Peter Witney keeps him at such a distance?'"

"I keep him at a distance! Good goodness, it's he who keeps me at arm's length!"

"Ah, that's the mistake you make. Your manner to him is unlike what it is to any other of your friends. You must admit that."

"Ah, well, I suppose it is. Between ourselves, Leo, I never see him come into a room but what I get a creepy sort of feeling down my back, and want to get out of it as fast as possible."

"Exactly. Your manner shows it. Now, if instead of the uncomfortable politeness you are always showing him, you'd just behave to him as you do to Alderman

Bury or your other old friends—slap him on the back now and then and call him 'my dear fellow'—you'd put things on a different footing at once."

"Do you really think so, Leo?"

"I do indeed. Now that little dig in the ribs you gave me just now, and that little cracker-like noise between your teeth, would come in very well in one of your funny little stories, just before the joke comes in. What was that anecdote I heard you relating the other day, about the man who put the whole of a grouse on his plate at one of your civic dinners? Tell it him to-night after dinner in the drawing-room, and don't forget the dig in the ribs and the cracker between your teeth."

Sir Peter thought well over Leo's counsel, came to the conclusion that there was "something in it," and that very night, after dinner was over, he made the effort to carry it into effect. An effort? It would be more correct to say a succession of efforts, for it cost the old gentleman two or three hours' hard thinking and his appetite for his dinner before he could make up his mind how, when, and where he should fasten upon the Earl, and begin the little story of the man who helped himself to a whole grouse. Leo guessed where his father's thoughts were wandering, as he noticed him rubbing his forehead hard once or twice with his pocket-handkerchief, giving contradictory orders to the butler, and drinking—for him, that is—an extraordinary amount of champagne.

But Leo, for all his plotting, only came in for the fag-end of the fun. After dinner he went off to his "den" again, and entered the drawing-room only just in time to see his father with a very red face standing close to the Earl with a very white one, and "Good gracious, how could he!" written plainly on the faces of every one of the three ladies present.

Lord Exmoor's stature seemed slowly increasing in height at the rate of an inch a minute. He looked up at the wall high over Sir Peter's head, slightly, very slightly, shrugged his shoulders, turned on his heel, and walked away.

"It is what one might expect in these houses," was his mental comment on Sir Peter's story of the man who helped himself to the whole grouse.

Fan, no doubt by way of making amends for Sir Peter's undue familiarity, came forward. "Will you like me to sing that little ballad I sang to you last night?" she asked, looking up very sweetly into his

face; and the Earl thawed into a deferential courtesy at once.

Sir Peter walked away in the other direction, his face getting redder and redder.

"I've done it, Leo," he whispered, "just as you told me; and—and—I don't think he liked it."

"Nonsense," said Leo, "that's his way of listening. Try again. Tell him a better story next time, with a little more action."

Fan finished her song, and looked up again in Lord Exmoor's face.

"I'm sure you could sing if you liked," she said. "Now confess. I've ever so many songs that would suit a man's voice: 'Juanita,' 'Sweethearts,' 'Never to know!'"

The Earl smiled and shook his head.

"I never sang a song in my life. Once I used to play the guitar. That was years ago when I was living in Seville. Ah, I can remember—no, I don't think I will tell you what I used to do in the hot summer nights at Seville."

"I know," cried Fan; "you used to serenade the ladies under their windows. Oh, how lovely to be woke up with music on a hot summer's night! I have a guitar; see if you can remember one of your old serenades on it! Oh, Leo, do get my guitar for me. I left it on the window-seat in the hall."

"Couldn't possibly, Fan. I'm just going to hold this skein of silk for Miss Miles," said Leo, going down on his knees and picking up that lady's embroidery basket, much to her astonishment.

So Fan had to ring for her guitar, and while it was being fetched, kept repeating, over and over again, "How lovely it would be to be serenaded on a hot summer's night!"

"I did a little in that way once," said Sir Peter to Lady Joan rather shyly. "I remember, when I was about twenty years of age, falling desperately in love with a young lady at one of the big boarding-schools a little outside the town where I lived. She dared me to come and serenade her on her birthday night. I did it—climbed over the garden-wall, and sang 'The Maid of Lodi' under the window she had told me was hers. But it was her governess's! I shall never forget my feelings when the window opened, and the elderly spinster put her head out and told me to be off or she'd send for the police."

Fan twanged at the guitar-strings and held it out to the Earl.

He shook his head.

"No, I wouldn't make myself ridiculous by playing out of tune."

Lady Joan looked up sweetly at Sir Peter.

"Don't you think you could remember a verse or two of 'The Maid of Lodi' if you tried. I know the air; I could play your accompaniment."

"Well, I don't mind trying," said Sir Peter, clearing his throat and going to the piano.

Evidently he did not mind, for he sang the whole song from beginning to end, and would have complied with an encore had one been given him.

And after that, Lord Exmoor threw Fan into raptures with a serenade from "Don Pasquale" on the guitar.

"Well, this beats all," thought Leo; "I'll take it out of those two old gentlemen properly by-and-by." Then aloud to Miss Miles he said: "Miss Miles, why should you and I be left out of all the fun in this fashion? If you'll allow me I'll hold every one of your skeins of silk in succession—I believe there are about six-and-thirty at the bottom of your basket. No, thank you, I won't sit down, I'll kneel here—my proper place—on the carpet at your feet."

And he made such desperate love to her for the rest of the evening, that the worthy lady did not know whether to feel flattered or affronted.

That night, when Lord Exmoor retired to his room, he found a dainty little missive, in pretty, feminine writing, pinned on his toilet-cushion. With not a little curiosity he opened it, and read as follows:

"Your lovely music is in my ears still. Ah, those fortunate ladies at Seville! What would I not give to be awakened by melody between two and three in the morning! My guitar lies upon the grand piano; my room is exactly over the drawing-room on the north side of the house. The shutters of the drawing-room are but lightly barred, and there are no bells attached."

"F."

Sir Peter also, that night, as he kicked off his boots beside his bedroom fire, had his attention suddenly arrested by a tiny sealed note on his mantelpiece. On opening it he read as follows:

"Your 'Maid of Lodi' will haunt me to my dying day! I would give worlds to be awakened by it—as that ogress of a

schoolmistress was—in the dark of a spring morning! I did not like to mention the fact to you in the drawing-room to-night, but this is the eve of my birthday! I am always very wakeful between one and two o'clock. My room, as you know, is immediately over the library, on the south side of the house."

"J."

And at the very moment that these two old gentlemen were perusing these insinuating missives, Leo, in his "den" on an upper floor, was settling himself into an easy-chair for a comfortable cigar.

"Now I flatter myself," he was saying, "that I've done the thing very neatly—handwriting and composition included. Now will they rise to the bait?—that's the question. Good-bye to their reputation for gallantry if they back out of it! And it means flannel nightcaps and gruel for a fortnight if they go in for it. There's a lovely east wind blowing to-night!"

FIGURE FOUR.

PARTNERS JOIN HANDS TO PLACES.

LEO was not allowed to enjoy his cigar many minutes in peace. There came a rap, at his door, and in response to his "Come in," Saunders entered.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, sir," he said, "but just as I was going to bed, Lord Exmoor's valet came down to me and said that my lord had been seized with a sudden attack of gout, and would be glad to know if there were any acetic acid in the house?"

"Gout! What a brilliant idea! I admire his ingenuity!" cried Leo.

"Sir?" said Saunders.

"Oh, you must go to Sir Peter for the acid," Leo resumed. "He always keeps a few bottles handy in his own room. I dare say he's in his first sweet sleep, and you'll get something thrown at your head, but that won't matter much."

But Sir Peter was a good way off his first sweet sleep. He was still standing over his fire, staring at the note he held in his hand, and listening to the east wind which moaned in his chimney.

The demand for acetic acid at his door brought an idea in its train.

"Gout, by all's that glorious!" he said to himself. "Now, if it had only attacked me instead of him, it would have helped me neatly out of this dilemma. But why shouldn't it attack me as well as him, I should like to know! We each at the

same dinner to-night, and drank the same wine. Bravo! Saunders," he cried aloud, "tell my lord I'm very sorry, but I want every bottle I have for my own immediate use—" then he stopped himself all in a hurry. "No," he cogitated, rubbing his chin, "that won't do either. Leo would get that confounded doctor into the house to-morrow, and it would mean toast and water and sago pudding for a month. Besides, it would bring the fact of my sixty years unpleasantly before the Lady Joan, and might frighten her off at once."

Saunders put his head in at the door. "Did you say you was taken bad too, Sir Peter?" he asked.

"No, no," said Sir Peter hurriedly, "a little twinge—nothing to speak of—I shall sleep it off. Take the bottles, they're in that cupboard. In for a penny, in for a pound," he groaned, as Saunders departed with the lotion. "Gruel and poultices wouldn't be any worse than toast and water and sago, and the honour and the glory of the thing ought to count for something. Perhaps, too, in a fur coat, and with something tied over my head, I may defy even the east wind."

Leo puffed away at his cigars. The house gradually settled itself into the deep silence of night.

Half-past twelve struck. "Now I wonder if he'll suddenly develope small-pox or measles, by way of getting out of the difficulty," thought Leo. One o'clock struck. "By Jove, he's going to back out of it," he said to himself. Half-past one struck, and then there came the sound of a door cautiously opening, and of a stealthy step descending the stairs. "By Jove, he's going in for it," cried the young man. "I admire his pluck!"

Slowly on tip-toes a dark figure, with a night-lamp in its hand, made its way along the gallery, off which the bedrooms opened, to the top of the stairs—a wide, noble flight lighted from above by a corona, which it was the habit of the house to keep burning throughout the night. The dark figure was clad in a long fur coat, and about its head and shoulders was wound a blanket in the fashion of an opera cloud. Leo followed it cautiously at a safe distance. As Sir Peter, having drawn back the bolts of the hall-door, passed out into the night, shading his lamp from the east wind, Leo stepped swiftly out of the shadows where he stood, and with a noiseless hand securely bolted and barred the door once more.

"Now," he said, "I'm off to bed as fast as possible, and it's a question who'll wake up first, Saunders or I. Of course, to-morrow morning my story will be clear enough. I sat up late writing letters, went down to the smoking-room to fetch something I had forgotten, saw the hall-door unfastened, and naturally enough barred and bolted it. It's the one who's shut out who'll have to account for himself."

But Leo did not get to bed so soon as he thought he would. As he entered the gallery off which his bedroom opened, he heard a sudden noise, a rush, a flutter and scamper, "as of ten thousand rats let loose," he told Fan afterwards—and Lady Joan came flying towards him dressed in a long blue dressing-gown, with her front hair done up with gilt crimping-pins. Close on her heels followed Fan in a pink dressing-gown, with her front hair done up in tiny white curling-papers.

"Burglars!" gasped Lady Joan. "There's a man under my windows—something woke me—it sounded like a pebble against the glass—I looked out and saw a dark figure moving—I called to Fan."

"Oh, Leo," cried Fan, catching hold of his arm, "there may be ever so many men round the house. Oh, do, do take care of us!"

"No," said Leo, holding her very tightly, "I won't take care of you. You're an atrocious little flirt. I'll take care of Lady Joan, I'll take care of Miss Miles——"

But at this moment Miss Miles made her appearance at the farther end of the gallery. She had on a scarlet flannel dressing-gown, with a pocket-handkerchief tied over her head.

"What did you say? Burglars?" she exclaimed. "Has no one any presence of mind?" and before any one could stop her she was down the stairs, and, with the air of a Norma, had sounded the big dinner-gong.

It was answered immediately by sounds of movement all over the house. Saunders came stumbling up from his sleeping apartment below stairs. Footmen, not in livery—maids, not in caps and aprons, swarmed from other quarters, and Leo, looking upwards from the gallery where he stood, with Fan and Lady Joan one either side of him, caught sight of Lord Exmoor's dignified head and shoulders bending over a balustrade a floor higher.

"My lord," he cried, "I should get back to bed again as fast as possible. Gout driven inwards is likely to prove fatal!"

Suddenly, in the midst of all this hubbub, there came a tremendous assault on the hall-door, which set all the bolts rattling, while a voice outside demanded admission.

"Why, there must be a troop of them; they must be armed," cried Fan.

"Why, it's Sir Peter's voice," said Miss Miles from below; "what in the world is he doing out there at this time of night?"

And Miss Miles, unlocking the hall-door, admitted the master of the house, in his fur coat, with the blanket about his head and shoulders.

Without a word he passed her, making straight for the big staircase, where the maids looked down upon him from above and the men looked up at him from below, and where stood his son and heir and the two ladies waiting to receive him.

"What's all this confounded noise about?" he asked irritably as he came along. "Why are you all out of your beds at this time of night, I should like to know? I opened my window half-an-hour ago to look at the stars in general—Ursa Major in particular—you may have noticed it's very bright to-night. I let fall my signet ring—it always hangs a little loose on my finger. I put on a wrap to go down and look for it, and, lo and behold, someone bolts me out, and someone else sets off screaming, and someone else sounds the dinner gong! What—what—what on earth does it all mean?"

Here a loud sneeze prevented further exclamation.

"I'll tell you what it means, Sir Peter, for some of us who are not so young as they were," said Miss Miles severely; "it means gruel and flannel night-caps, and possibly linseed poultices into the bargain, for a week to come."

And so it did; for Sir Peter, at any rate.

That was to be an eventful week. It saw the departure of Lord Exmoor and Lady Joan.

"My attack of gout threatens to be a sharp one. I must get back to my own doctor as soon as possible," the Earl explained to Leo. But to Lady Joan he said: "After all, I think the lawyers can arrange for an extension of the mortgage far better than I can. And—and you needn't write to Eckersley. He is a gentleman, at any rate, and you might do worse."

And to himself he said:

"I shall be thankful enough to see the last of these people. In houses of this sort one never knows what is going to

happen; they might be asking me to dance a hornpipe next."

Before the week was out, too, Fan confessed her penitence to Leo in her own fashion.

"If you'll only admit, Leo," she said, "that I can flirt just as nicely as other young ladies, I'll promise never to do it again."

To which Leo replied:

"You won't get a chance, Fan. I've seen 'the ten-roomed cottage with good stabling,' and you know what that means."

And during that week Miss Miles kept Sir Peter supplied with such delicious gruel, and such lovely linseed poultices, that, on the first day he came downstairs, he said, addressing her, for the first time in his life, by her Christian name:

"Tabitha, after all, I think fifty matches sixty better than five-and-twenty does. What do you say?"

To which Miss Miles replied:

"Exactly, Sir Peter; I was just about to make the same remark."

THE BED THAT COULD NOT BE MOVED.

By W. W. FENN.

I WAS always influenced by coincidences, presentiments, and strange unaccountable tales. I always enjoyed reading or hearing of them, and for years aspired to be the hero of one. Hours of relaxation without a good sensational tale or ghost story were shorn of half their restful benefit. Of course I knew all the tricks of the ghostly romancer by heart; I was up to all his ancient houses, tapestried chambers, old pictures, furniture, secret panels, and the like; but they amused me to follow none the less, and at one time my only wish was for some personal experience amongst such surroundings. It never came, however, and when at last there did happen to me a startling adventure, it was amidst circumstances the most prosaic and commonplace, having for a background nothing more romantic and weird than a newly-erected suburban and "Jerry-built" house.

Yes, it was in such an unpromising place, and under most matter-of-fact conditions, that I passed through an experience of which even to this day I cannot think without a shudder. Not that it was a ghostly form of the terrible, and, though unnatural.

could, not be said to be supernatural ; but it was sufficiently appalling to be classed with any romance of dark deeds and singular escapes.

My business took me entirely out of the region of romance. I had never had a chance of passing a night in a haunted house or room, and, as my studies in that direction led me only to look in such places for what I hoped to find, I was perhaps less prepared for what happened.

It came about in this fashion. The Volunteer movement had just commenced, and I, like other able-bodied youngsters, enlisted in the cause with considerable enthusiasm. Five-and-twenty years ago, those who had more money and leisure than the rest were naturally thought the fittest to undertake commands, without much regard to anything else. Here and there exceptions, however, were made to this unwritten rule, and I was one of these, for certainly I had no money. I do not want to appear egotistical ; but I had a turn for soldiering, was smart, quick, and fairly well set up. I soon acquired proficiency sufficient to justify quick promotion, and ere long I found myself captain of my company. It was said I had the making in me of a good soldier. I obeyed to the letter, and expected others to do the same. Authority, however, was often disputed on parade. The position of an officer, therefore, who knew what he was talking about, was not always an enviable one. Mine was not, for I am hasty and peppery, and seldom measured my words to the rank and file ; but in the main I do not think I was unpopular, and I certainly had no idea that I was sowing the seeds of vengeful ill-will. One young fellow there was, however, who displayed a very turbulent spirit, and perhaps I might have doubted him. But after one or two unseemly disputes, in our relative capacities of captain and private, he, like others of his temper, left the corps, and I utterly forgot his existence and his name.

After two years, the persistent cold shoulder turned by the authorities of the War Office towards the Volunteers, as is well known, had a very cooling effect upon their enthusiasm. Many of the regiments dwindled visibly ; the earnest men became disgusted, and the indifferent threw up what little interest they might originally have taken in the movement. I was amongst the former, and when by degrees the numbers became so reduced that the

whole affair was fast growing farcical, I, too, resigned, and retired for awhile into private life. Regretfully ! Yes, for I had grown fond of soldiering. Still, I saw that unless the movement was placed on a very different footing, the position of a private was far preferable to that of an officer ; indeed, was the only becoming one for a citizen-soldier to hold. This feeling led me eventually to join another corps in that capacity. I enjoyed the shooting, the exercise, and the drill ; refusing all offers of promotion, content to play the humble and obscure part of an amateur Tommy Atkins.

When the third year of this service was drawing to its close, there came round a certain Easter time, bringing with it, according to custom, the Volunteer Review. I cared little for these military promenades, contributing, as they then did, to little else than pomp and vanity ; but I thought I would attend this one, which was to be held in the neighbourhood of Goldchester, my birthplace, away up in the Midlands ; but to which I had not been for eighteen years. I thought I should like to visit the old and once familiar spot. I heard it had improved and grown into a large manufacturing town, and I was curious, if not sentimental, on the subject. My finances, however, were low, and although I knew I could go inexpensively enough for the three days with the regiment, I wanted a longer and more uninterrupted time at the place in order to give my curiosity, and such sentiment as I had, full play. So I determined to spend a week in the town on the cheap, and join headquarters when they arrived there.

A large, wild, and open tract of heath and moorland, for which the neighbourhood was distinguished, offered a splendid battle-ground for the amateur soldiers, and this, in former days, had been a favourite haunt of mine. Now, I was told, the suburbs of Goldchester extended nearly to the skirts of this moor, and I settled that I would try and find a lodging on that side of the town.

Well, I arrived on the Monday afternoon preceding the Good Friday, and made straight to carry out my intention, but when I had threaded my way through what were formerly the limits of the town in the direction of the moor, I simply lost myself. Grown and altered, indeed, was everything, with lines of new streets, tramcars, and bustle, where once had been green lanes ; but eventually I got clear of

these and found myself in the new suburb. The outskirts of manufacturing towns are seldom so cheerful and pretty as these happened to be, and although there was an unfinished look about the most recently-built streets and rows of houses, and although these were in themselves somewhat mean and essentially "Jerry-built," they were not exactly ugly. Their intrusion upon the greenery of Nature had spared many fine trees and clusters of trees which, intermingling pleasantly with the bricks and mortar, veiled and softened the inherent obtrusiveness of the pretentious architectural lines. A fairly broad and pretty river, willow-fringed and rush-margined, likewise lent considerable attraction to the district through which it wound in many a picturesque sweep and bend. The row of houses, in one of which I took up my abode, backed on to this river, down to the banks of which ran little narrow strips of gardens, from the rear of the buildings, whilst their wooded character afforded a bright and cheerful outlook from the windows. There were not more than half-a-dozen dwellings in Chester Terrace, as it modestly called itself, and when I first came upon it and saw the words, "Apartments for a Single Gentleman," in the window of an end house, I determined at once to negotiate for them. Indeed there was no choice, for at the next door—the only other occupied tenement—there was nothing to let; the row did not appear to have been finished more than a few weeks. The landlord was at home when I knocked, and a brass plate on the door informed me that his name was Carstack, engineer and surveyor. The next door too, number five, had another plate on it with the name, "Mr. Raphael Carstack, Surgeon, etc." In reply to my enquiry, the engineer begged me to walk in. He was effusively polite, but his voice was harsh, unpleasant, and not without a faint foreign accent.

"Would I be so good as to look at the rooms?—on the first floor, back and front. He was sure he would make me comfortable. His daughter-in-law was an excellent cook—she lived next door with her husband, and came in and out to attend upon lodgers."

The terms being low, I went upstairs to inspect. A comfortable sitting-room with bed-room adjoining behind, both simply but neatly furnished; the bed alone calling for any special mention. It was somewhat peculiar-looking, from being very low, iron, without hangings, and for a single person.

I agreed to engage the apartments for the inside of a fortnight.

"You have come to take part in our great military display, sir," said Mr. Carstack, watching me as I stood my rifle in a corner and unslung my knapsack, for of course I was in uniform and in heavy marching order—rather more heavy perhaps than became a soldier. "Ah! it will be a fine display—good practice and excellent training. It is an admirable movement, this. My son is a Volunteer and a capital shot, but he has not much time—doctors are busy men."

I expressed satisfaction, and the voluble landlord continued:

"As you are here so soon, you will perhaps enter the rifle competition, which takes place this week on the moor. There are many prizes—some very valuable, and open to all comers, some."

"Ah! indeed?" I said, "I am glad to know that. Certainly I shall go in for a little shooting. There should be an excellent range to be found on the moor."

"Oh! yes, first rate, sir; but excuse me, you seem to speak as if you knew the place? You are, perhaps, no stranger?"

"No, I knew Goldchester years ago."

"Really? Do you know many of the inhabitants?"

"No, I suspect not now. Most of those I knew are dead, and others would not remember me."

"It is long then since you were here? Many years perhaps?" continued Carstack inquisitively, and eyeing me furtively. "And your name, sir? your name might be known, if not yourself."

"My name is Garratt—Richard Garratt," I answered, "but I doubt if any of my family are to be found in Goldchester now."

He appeared struck by the name, started at it almost, and then regarded me more curiously than ever.

"But now, perhaps, you will get me something to eat," I went on, a little bored by the man's curiosity and manner. I had rapidly made up my mind that I did not like him. He had a sinister aspect and a bad face, though he was fairly good-looking; dark, about sixty, and decidedly not wholly English. The effect my name produced on him set me wondering if I could remember him as connected with the town, and after a bit, I did seem to recover a dim memory of it. Yes, it certainly was associated somehow with my early days, but too

vaguely to give me a lead as to any circumstances connected with it. I am naturally taciturn, and perhaps not very sociable, and on this occasion I felt unusually depressed. The return to the old place, the recollections it brought back, and the reference the man had made to my possible acquaintances in it, revived memories not exhilarating.

So after awhile I went forth for a stroll while my meal was preparing. In the course of the ramble, I came across the headquarters of the local corps, where a placard announced, with the full particulars of the rules, entries, etc., that the prizes for the Grand Rifle Competition on Goldstone Moor were "now on view." I read, became interested, and went into the building. I determined to enter myself at least for the "All Comers" Prize—a handsome silver-gilt goblet with a purse of twenty sovereigns, and there it stood amongst others, on a sort of counter in front of me. I thought I should like to pull that off; it would be very acceptable, and I was prepared to back my skill. I did so, by paying the necessary small fees to the attendant, had my name and that of my corps entered in the official list of competitors, and then looked over it. Amongst them was the name of Raphael Carstack, doubtless that of my landlord's son—the doctor.

The shooting was to take place on the two following days, so I determined that I would not give way to the sad memories which the neighbourhood revived, and that I should infinitely prefer two or three days on the open, breezy moor after all, to spending them in wandering about the now, to me, lonely streets.

Everything was satisfactory and comfortable at the lodgings, but the bedstead still attracted my attention. When stooping to look at it, I tried to push its head close up to the wall; to my amazement I found it could not be moved. The short legs were riveted to the floor. Was there ever such a queer arrangement? And what could be its purpose? It stood isolated, facing the window, but, as I say, not with its head close to the wall; the space of a foot at least was between. Well, I could not make it out, so I turned in and slept soundly. I may note that a second door in the room appeared to communicate with the next house, but had no lock or any sign of fastening on my side. It seemed to be a fixture, solid and without any apparent means of being opened.

The next morning I could not refrain from questioning the young woman—the daughter-in-law—who served my breakfast, about the bed. She appeared unable, certainly unwilling, to expatiate on the subject. It was some invention of her father's; he was always inventing one thing or another—she didn't understand them. A comely, intelligent, but sad and scared-looking woman, neat, handy, and attractive, but not quite of the stamp one expects to find in the wife of a medical man; nor did her occupation harmonise with her position. As she was about to leave the room she glanced back at me, and, putting her finger to her lips, said, lowering her voice:

"Don't ask about that bed, sir. Don't seem surprised at it. Take my advice." Then, walking close up to me, she whispered: "Keep good friends with them—my father and husband I mean."

Startled and surprised for a moment, I did not speak, and she was again about to leave the room when I called her back peremptorily.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "I keep good friends with everybody I hope; your father and husband are not likely to give me cause to break my habit, I suppose?"

"I hope not; but they are dangerous to quarrel with."

"How long have you been married?"

"Not six months, and I wish I'd never seen him."

"Does your husband ill-treat you?"

"Not quite that; very near. But I'm afraid of them both."

Tears were starting in her eyes, and she seemed on the point of unburthening her mind further when a footstep in the passage below was audible, and she flew from the room like a frightened hare.

"Sufficiently mysterious all this," I thought, "and not reassuring. I must keep my eyes open." Then, in a not quite comfortable frame of mind, I prepared for my shooting expedition, shouldered my rifle, and in the course of half-an-hour found myself one of many stragglers who were wending their way towards the rifle-range.

A bright and lovely spring morning, without wind, and with a soft, subdued, yet clear light, it was all that a good shot could desire. I do not linger to describe the scene. The arrangements were orderly, and conducted after the usual manner of such gatherings. Volunteers from various neighbouring corps made up the squads of

competitors for the various prizes at various ranges. Some were entirely composed of the uniforms belonging to the Goldcheester company, and two or three of these eventually fell in with the shooting party for the All Comers Prize, in which I was concerned. Our names and qualifications attested, and our rifles duly examined, after the customary loose and happy-go-lucky system, or want of system, which was adopted in those days, we marched to the range in charge of a militia sergeant, and went through the preliminary stages of the competition.

All this I pass over. It is enough that, in the course of the afternoon, I and three others stood out as the four highest scorers, qualified to shoot off the last stage. Three others, and as their names were called out, I noted that of Raphael Carstack. One look left no doubt that he was the son of his father—as like him as he could stare—and stare he did at me considerably. Nor did I fail to return his gaze, for it had gradually grown upon me that I knew his face. At last I caught it, but only just before we had arrived at the critical moment of the contest. He and I had made the two highest scores out of the four with a tie, and were about to shoot it off, at eight hundred yards. He was to fire first, and as he dropped on his knee in position, he gave me about as malicious a look as human eyes are capable of, and it was that look which told me where I had seen him before. He was that young recalcitrant fellow in my old company who had insulted me on parade five years ago! Surely an ominous coincidence this—our being brought together again under these circumstances—and in more direct opposition than ever!

Whether his temper, stirred by his old animosity and increased by our present position, affected his shooting, I do not know. But in his five rounds he failed to score what was possible by some three or four points—the consequence being that I went in, beat him easily, and was pronounced winner of the prize. The venom in his eyes, it is needless to say, was not diminished after this, nor did any civil effort of mine at conciliation affect it. I thought it better not to refer to the past—he appeared to do the same. The few words we exchanged referred almost exclusively to the business on hand; and although I made some reference to my having taken up my abode under his father's roof, he ignored that fact, being

too much occupied in the meal he was making off his own heart with disgust, mortification, and hatred of me, for having snatched the goblet and the twenty pounds from his grasp.

At the end of the day, as I returned to the lodgings, I thought to myself:

"Well, whatever his young wife may have meant, fate has ordained that I should fly in the very face of her advice!" I had quarrelled most effectually with one member of her family, and by no fault of my own.

As bed-time arrived, my mind naturally reverted more than ever to the girl's reticence about that immoveable bedstead, and I gave it closer examination. This showed me that the legs dropped into little sockets or holes in the floor, and could not be lifted out of them. This looked as if it might be connected with the room beneath. Then what was beneath? Merely the ground-floor back—the landlord's sleeping apartment. The window gave upon the garden behind. Spring twilight still lingered in the sky, and, as I looked out, I saw father and son down at the end of the garden among the bushes close to the river. They were both attentively regarding my window at the instant I drew up the blind. When they saw me they faced round, as if disliking being caught spying. There was nothing in all this, very likely; yet after what had passed it was not to be overlooked.

Again I soon turned in, but did not sleep well. At first I was strangely restless, and later heavily drowsy and dream-troubled. Young Carstack and his father appeared to be standing on either side of the bed, and then one became my own father—long dead. Then they both stooped over me, and they both had my father's face close to mine. Then I was out on the moor by the butts—firing was going on, bullets whizzed round my head; one struck me on the arm, and I saw in the distance that it had been fired by young Carstack. He was aiming at me again! In my frantic efforts to get under shelter I awoke. This sort of thing seemed to go on more or less all night, but when up and dressed I did not feel much the worse.

There awaited me on the breakfast table a somewhat bulky envelope, containing a large letter forwarded to me by my landlady at home, to whom I had sent my address the night of my arrival in Chester Terrace. As I was about to tear the outer envelope I noticed that it was soiled, and on a closer

scrutiny it looked very much as if it might have been damped and opened after it had been stuck down. Yes, it certainly had been tampered with. Again, I fancied that the enclosure, a long blue envelope like a lawyer's, had been treated in the same way. However, I did not stop to consider, for I was ignorant of the handwriting and curious to learn the contents. I was not accustomed to receive lawyers' letters. Well indeed might I have been curious, for the document announced that, most unexpectedly, a certain valuable property, actually in Goldchester itself, had been left me by an uncle just deceased. It had belonged to my father, but, through some irregular technicality in his will, had not devolved upon me at his death as I knew it ought to have done. Ten years ago I had had a lawsuit about this property, and lost it. And now here it was bequeathed to me! My uncle and I had quarrelled over it, and had not met for years. I did not know till this moment even where he had been living. And now it turned out he had lived and died in Goldchester, and had been buried the day before my arrival. The letter came from a local lawyer, had been sent to my home, and forwarded thence to me here again at Goldchester. Stranger still, and yet still stranger—the property consisted of the very land on which this new suburb, with Chester Terrace in the centre of it, had been built.

This discovery, arrived at only after close and attentive perusal of the letter now in my hand, literally took my breath away. The bare facts here condensed must be accepted as sufficient, briefly to explain a very complicated business. But they are the facts, and that is all that is wanted.

I did not spend that day at the rifle range, as may be guessed. It was mainly passed in the solicitor's office, and with him in visiting my uncle's residence—a new house recently built on the estate. A childless, lonely, unloved old man, the solicitor seemed to have been nearly his only friend.

That gentleman, in the course of our long confabulation, told me many things concerning him; one matter especially adding considerably to the curious coincidences which had already associated me with the Carstacks. It seems that my uncle's will, by which I inherited, had been made four years previously, but that about a week before his death, he had had another drawn, which he, fortunately for me, had not signed. By it he had left

that notable estate to none other than young Mr. Raphael Carstack, the doctor who had been attending him ever since he settled in the neighbourhood.

"He is a sharp, knowing fellow, that," said the lawyer, "and acquired great influence over your uncle. I am only surprised that he did not take care to see that the will was executed. I drew both the documents and have them in my possession, and I was daily expecting to be summoned to the old gentleman with his second one, that he might sign it. It is strange how people change their minds. Four years ago, when he was first ill, your uncle was keenly anxious that you should have the property—made you his executor with me—told me he regretted having availed himself of the legal inaccuracy, which gave it to him instead of to you. Then this young doctor got hold of him, mesmerised him, as one may say, I suppose, for a while, and induced him to alter the disposition of his wealth; and yet the old man could not make up his mind to dispossess you. Anyway, you have nothing to thank the doctor for—nor he, you, for the matter of that—there will be no love lost between you."

"No, indeed," I exclaimed, and then I recounted to the solicitor my experiences of the Carstack family.

"Yes," he said, "it is very odd, certainly, that you going there as the lodger, should actually, while under their roof, be transformed into the ground landlord of the whole estate."

"Well," I said, "I think I shall move my traps. The sooner I get away the better now, remembering what Mr. Raphael Carstack said; for, letting alone the shooting episode, I could not have more thoroughly incurred the doctor's animosity than by cutting him out of the property."

"Perhaps it would be as well," said the lawyer, "for, to tell you the truth, neither father nor son is quite beyond suspicion. The elder man originally lived in a very low part of the town, and came there no one exactly knows when or why. There is a rumour that at one time in his life he was kept in retirement for his country's good, and although his son is fully qualified to practise, it is said that, as a medical student in London, he was connected with some professor of mesmerism and spirit-rapping, a charlatan who had to make himself scarce. I should never be astonished to hear that this fellow has to do the same some day. He has little or no practice—seems to be very

needy, and I have heard that he and his father took these two adjoining houses in Chester Terrace with the idea of establishing a sort of mesmeric hospital, or something of that kind. The bed you mention, probably, is some scheme in that direction."

"What does he certify that my uncle died of?" I asked significantly.

"Angina Pectoris; but I believe that's all straight enough. It would have been Carstack's policy to have kept him alive as long as he could, or until that second will was signed."

Further consideration determined me, now that money was no object, to move to one of the hotels; but the three best were quite full, owing to the influx of visitors and Volunteers for the review. Four other attempts to get into second-class inns failed for the same reason. Then I laughed at my weakness. What had I to fear at Chester Terrace? Being there, there I would stay until the review was over. My co-executor the lawyer and I dined together that night. We decided that I should say nothing to the Carstacks on the curious way in which fate had mixed the young doctor up with my affairs. I would wait and see if they took any notice of it. The father let me in, handed me a chamber candle with his usual politeness, but made no reference to the matter, and I finally went to bed, sleeping fairly well. But the following night—the Good Friday Eve—matters came to a climax indeed. Nothing particular occurred at the distribution of the prizes, which took place in the afternoon. I received mine from the hands of the Mayoress of Goldchester, and brought it home.

Mr. Raphael Carstack did not show up, and his father told me apologetically that he had a patient to see at a great distance, and probably would not return home till the morrow. The fellow ostentatiously inspected and admired the goblet, eyed the purse cunningly, and congratulated me.

Naturally I liked him less and less the more I saw of him, and now that bed-time had again come round, I had a greater distaste than ever for my situation. But for the lateness of the hour, I really think I would have gone out and hired a bed at any common public-house. But I must pass over the conflict of feeling with which, about midnight, I lay down for the last time on that bed that could not be moved.

The silence of the house and neighbourhood was entirely undisturbed. The moonlight shone dimly through the half-curtained window. I was tired, and all but my troubled, misgiving spirit seemed propitious for sleep, and to sleep I went in time.

How much of what followed was dream, and how much reality—except the end, which was real enough, Heaven knows!—it is impossible to determine. But here is my experience.

As had occurred two nights before, it seemed to me that the father and son were on either side of the bed, bending over me, but always with my own father's face in each case; but not, as previously, creating any distress in my mind. Their presence rather had a soothing effect now than otherwise; so soothing that, after a while, I dreamed that they were sending me to sleep; and I know no more of how long I so remained, or what happened in the interval, until—well, until I found myself plunged into the ice-cold water of the river at the foot of the garden, swimming for dear life to the bank!

I am no psychologist, and do not pretend to explain what mental condition I had passed into; but the end of that condition, whatever it was, is simply that I was aroused from it by finding myself in the midst of the deep, flowing river, the full moon shining bright and high above my head, glittering on the water and revealing all objects as clear as day.

Fortunately, I am a good swimmer; otherwise I must have been drowned. As it was, after the plunge—how taken I know not—I came to the surface wide awake enough, as may be supposed, and, before I had time almost to be surprised, was standing safe on the shore in my night-dress. Then such a turmoil of amazement, incredulity, and breathless wonder, not unmingled with terror, took possession of me that, for many minutes, I could only lean, panting, against a tree. Ere I had in the least steadied my mind, the two Carstacks stood beside me with outstretched hands, proffera of assistance, and wild expressions of surprise and horror.

"Good Heavens, sir," they cried simultaneously, "what has happened? What have you been doing? You must have been walking in your sleep!"

I could not answer, and the elder continued:

"We heard your door open; my son had just returned, and we were sitting

talking. We heard your door open, I say, and your footsteps going downstairs; we heard you unlock the back door and go out; and when you did not come back after several minutes, we thought it so strange that we both came out to look for you, and then we suddenly saw you standing here! What can it mean? Pray come indoors. Let us help you."

Still bewildered, but gradually recovering somewhat of my presence of mind, I hurried with them back to the house, into the landlord's front room, where there was a fire. Nothing could be more solicitous than their behaviour. The young doctor gave me some brandy, and they both actively helped to dry and reclothe me.

It would be impossible to recount in detail a tenth part of what was said on either hand. Such a conflict of astonishment, and solicitude, and attempts at explanation went on in wild and disjointed expressions, that I suppose two hours passed before I went upstairs again; the outcome being that there seemed no way of accounting for what had happened save the original one offered, namely, that I had been walking in my sleep. This I doubted from the first. I had never done such a thing before—knew perfectly well I had never been subject to somnambulism.

Once again alone in my rooms, an examination of them threw no light on the matter. The bed merely looked as it would when one leaves it after restless sleep, and the lockless side-door into the next house remained firm shut. The prize purse, however, with its twenty sovereigns, which I had placed in my trousers-pocket, had disappeared! The garment had been brought to me when dressing below stairs, and the money might have fallen out there. But I was too shaken and fatigued to distress myself further then, so I dropped into the easy-chair in the sitting-room.

The spring dawn soon began to break—all was perfectly still once more, and I was beginning to doze, when the very faintest sound of a footstep on the landing aroused me. The door opened, and Mrs. Raphael entered, more scared and fear-stricken than ever.

"I cannot see murder done," she whispered hurriedly, as she came tip-toe towards me. "Leave this house. He made you do what he wished. I have heard him boast of such things. He made you walk of your own accord into the river, hoping you would drown. They little thought I was watching. I dare not stop to explain

if I could. They might hear me, and would then serve me the same—they will make away with me some day, I know. Promise not to let out what I say—only don't trust that bed again, and don't speak of me. Promise to be silent."

I vainly tried to detain her as she then flew from the room, and I heard her, a few minutes later, lighting the fire down in the kitchen, with an ostentation of noise.

It was just as I had suspected, then! The extraordinary condition which had overtaken me was due to some mysterious trickery connected with that bed—some magneto-electric hanky-panky in which this young doctor might have become an adept through his former association with that spirit-rapping impostor spoken of by the lawyer. That was my conclusion as soon as I had time to pull my wits together. What the precise nature of the process was, no one, probably, could say. Nor, for the sake of the poor woman, would I enquire too curiously—at least not for the present. Equally for her sake I had abstained from asking Carstack about the bed previously. No! I would quit the house forthwith, without, if possible, arousing suspicion, and, if possible, without encountering these two villains again. Therefore, I employed the next hour in quietly packing my knapsack and bag, etc. At seven o'clock I went downstairs, feeling sure that the man would be asleep, and calling quietly to Mrs. Raphael, said:

"I am going out, but shall be back to breakfast at ten."

Then I hurried away, fully accounted, and reached my friend the lawyer's before he was up. An explanation followed, and we decided to send one of his clerks to pay what I owed in Chester Terrace, and to say that I was unexpectedly prevented from returning.

Thus I passed the Good Friday, and, considering all things, settled to give up the review and return home on the Saturday, and did so. My changed fortunes implied a changed life, involving much business. Whatever views I might have formed for ultimately looking further into my mysterious experience, and, if possible, of punishing the culprits, were never carried out, for the simple reason that, within a fortnight, letters from my solicitor contained the following information:

"Your friends, the Carstacks, are in trouble. The wife of the younger was yesterday morning found dead in her bed, and there is so much mystery, I am told,

about the cause of her death, that father and son lie under grave suspicion."

Later on, the following came to hand :

"The inquest has failed to solve the mystery. All the doctors could say was that death had arisen from failure of the heart's action, though how caused, there was no evidence to show. A verdict to that effect, therefore, was returned. But that there was foul play somehow may be inferred from the fact that the two Carstacks have bolted. One does not know exactly yet what is going to be done with their belongings. Meanwhile, an examination of the two houses has led to the discovery of an electric battery of great power placed directly beneath your remarkable bed and connected with it; whilst wires from it were conducted to another bed in the doctor's house exactly similar to yours, and on which the poor woman was found. I am not scientific, and do not pretend to explain the working of such mysterious forces; but these discoveries have been sufficient to induce the authorities to issue warrants for the apprehension of both men, on the charge of contriving the death of young Mrs. Carstack."

They were never caught—never heard of again at Goldchester. This was in 1864.

Last year I paid a visit to the States, and, in a prosperous new town, far away in the West, a doctor had established himself, who professed to effect wondrous cures by electricity and mesmerism. A pamphlet issued by him, on the quack-doctor pattern, fell into my hands. In it I read, amidst a mass of impudent verbiage, his argument to the effect that, as electricity was a marvellous agent in curing hysteria, epileptic fits, etc., so could it be turned to useful account as a great mesmeric curative agent, on the principle of like curing like. He urged that soothing, beneficial trances could be produced by the patient reclining on a certain bed, which he had patented, and through which galvanism could be applied after the manner in which electric baths are given.

Need it be said that these words struck me? I took a look at his establishment, and found that it called itself "The Mesmeric Hospital," conducted by Dr. Gableton. But as strange coincidences seemed destined to be associated with this matter to the last, I happened, whilst gazing at the house from the opposite side of the street, to observe a middle-aged man come out, in whom I had no difficulty in recognising, despite the lapse of more than twenty years.

Mr. Raphael Carstack. He did not see me, and, as I was only passing through the place, I did not think it my business to trouble myself with him or his doings. But the fact makes a significant end to my story, which, perhaps, would not have been written but for it.

CHRISTINE LA BARBE.

By MARIA L. JENKIN.

CHAPTER I.

It was one of the early days of May—and what can we say better than that when we are going in the next moment to set before you a London crowd?

The chance freaks of April sunshine and showers were over; the sun was warm and glad; the roses were coming; the May-bloom had come; the London grass was green and fresh; and the London trees were green and fresh, too.

Ay, truly, May is the time to see London at its best, and where better can one catch the essence of the pleasant graciousness and fulness of London life than in the Park?

But to see what we see, you must shut your eyes a moment and go back ten years, fifteen years, nay, many more in truth; but we do not wish to give the literal year, because we do not wish in any way to suggest a personal exactitude for the beings or the doings of our story.

Being so early in May, perhaps the Row was not so crowded as it would be a week or so hence, but it was full enough. People say that in no capital of Europe does one see such equipages, such horses, such lovely faces, as one sees in the "Row" in the height of the London season. And on the special day we set before you there were many foreigners about—men and women of distinction and with historic names, amid those who rolled by in the luxurious carriages; men and women, too, of sorrier aspect, of worn and saddened aspect, amongst the standing onlookers. Something more than fifteen years ago—you see we will be lax as to date—France had had a great upheaval; a great war; a great subjugation; and her sons and her daughters had, hundreds of them, come over to our welcoming shores.

Of all intensely English groups there was none more English than one which, by the stopping of a barouche, became for a few moments a prominent one.

An old lady—well, say, a woman of

sixty, but we call her old in contradistinction to her young companion—leaned back upon the dark purple paddings of the carriage. Her hair was grey, but not white, therefore lacking the peculiar distinction which white hair gives to even a plain woman of dark eyes and tint. Nevertheless, Miss Haylesford was striking. She always wore black, but her individuality must have been strong enough to be felt above the unmarked beauty of her face and the as unmarked fashion of her clothes. By her side was a girl. She was the very incarnation of Spring in her light, rose-tinted, feathery-trimmed dress; a parasol, too, all of soft-hued pinkish feathers, was carelessly laid down across to the opposite seat as she leaned forward to talk. If her dress suggested the very spring-time of roses, then, surely, she herself suggested the golden beauty of some Saxon maiden, whose snowy skin and whose yellow tresses the poets have sung. Saxon, too, was her name—Matilda.

Haylesford was her surname, as was that of the old lady, and as was that also of the bronzed young man whose advent upon the scene had caused the stopping of the carriage. The young couple were cousins, the old lady was their aunt, the sister of a certain Jonathan Haylesford, banker, of Lombard Street, and of Wexford Gardens, Hyde Park.

"Well, good-bye, then, for the present!" So said Duke, or Marmaduke Haylesford, after a three minutes' talk.

"Oh, you have made up your mind at last, then!" the girl cried.

"Made up his mind—has he a mind to make up?" the old lady said slowly, but with a gleam in her dark eyes as if she were amusing herself. "He has only caught sight of someone, and that someone has carried off that part of him which he calls his mind!"

"Aunt!" There was reproach in the girl's cry; but, perhaps, as she laughed at the same time, there was a family habit of making fun of the young man.

He was fair and Saxon-hued beneath the tan which a year's travel had graced him with, and the quick, red blood surged up, and a flash came into his blue eyes at the same moment that the girl had made her reproachful cry. Then, as had happened with her, this serious touch of the subject was laughed away, and with the anger all blown aside, he said, with the careless gaiety of one who is accustomed to parrying good-humoured criticisms:

"If you must know, Maida, my bit of a mind was made up long before. I had no intention of driving with you, but I had an intention of inviting myself to dinner."

"Curiosity! And suppose she is ugly, or a barbaric foreigner? Or, worse than all, suppose she has never come at all, and only papa turns up?"

"In those last circumstances I shall not stay late."

Duke stroked his fair moustache.

"And your uncle would be justified in being angry. Would every man of his age be chivalrous enough to go all the way to Dover to meet his daughter's companion?"

"Papa would," was the girl's illogical answer. "Besides, if Christine is to be my companion, is she not also the daughter of papa's friend, who is ruined by this horrid war? Duke"—and the girl became soft and pleading—"would it not be kinder for you to come another night?"

"A French girl is not shy."

"Why not?" Matilda's sweet face was a little more rosy.

Her cousin only shrugged his shoulders gaily and said lightly:

"I really don't know; at any rate, if she is, she will only be all the more charming. I shall come." He raised his hat and moved back.

"If you don't forget," the old lady cried. And though the carriage was already on the move, the progress was quite slow enough for the words to reach him.

"Yes, yes; that, of course!" And perhaps there was the least suspicion of a little drawl in the sentence. "But as Reeves announces dinner, he will announce me."

This was heard as easily by the ladies, and they nodded their faith or unfaith to him.

"Just the same!" Miss Haylesford remarked, as much to herself as to Matilda. "The year's knocking about the world has not altered him."

"Do you think that, aunt? He seems to me quite old sometimes. At the Crawleys' last night—"

"Sir Hugh Crawley would make any man show himself at his best."

To this the girl gave no answer. Was one needed?

Friends were passing, and she nodded to them in her sweet, perhaps rather languid way, and then she seemed to lose the vivacity under which we have seen her. Vivacity with Matilda Haylesford needed

to be roused by some person or event that touched her alone, and without such contact she was quiet and sweet. She was kindness and goodness itself; but she was—nay, how can we put it without making her appear inane, which she was not!—shall we say she had very little power of originating!

And perhaps this easy, sweet nature had been fostered, because in her whole life she had been dominated by persons of strong will and of abundant energy. Her mother she never remembered; her busy, active father, and her busy, active aunt had brought her up.

Now a new element was coming into her life. She was gay and glad over it. A girl was coming to live with her, to be like a sister; her aunt said to save her from many a walk which she herself did not care to take, but which was good for Maida. Her father said, "H'm! as a sort of beginning for one of poor La Barbe's children. He'll never recover himself—never can."

Perhaps M. La Barbe thought he could recover himself in time. Nevertheless, for Christine to have an English home for a year or two would be a good thing. She was young as yet—too young for much.

Eight o'clock was striking.

It was the dinner hour at the Haylesfords', but what a very informal appearance did the luxurious drawing-room present! Travelling gear of all sorts; was thrown on chair, and table, and settee—a man's light dust-coat, a hat, a railway rug; a bundle of shawls and umbrella and parasol all strapped together, and not strapped very neatly either; even a girl's brown hat.

And the people assembled were, two of them, those we have seen: Miss Haylesford, in black silk and a cap of old lace; Matilda, in white, with spring-suggesting ribbons of pale yellow about it. A string of pearls was round a throat, firm and white like that of a Greek divinity; she was a picture of ethereal loveliness in her fair and tender colouring. Then, for contrast, stood the grey-haired father in the black frock-coat of the respectable, middle-aged Londoner, his face ruddy and dusty with travel, and a spice of unusual excitement. Opposite him was another traveller.

The daintiest brown maiden imaginable; barely of middle height, in the trimmest of brown stuff dresses, made piquante by a large falling linen collar and white linen cuffs. A jacket was thrown over one arm,

and her plump, brown hands were demurely folded. Demureness was in her pose, but, by no means in her glance; if her brown, closely-coiffured head were bent, then, at the same moment, her dark brown eyes glanced enquiringly at the old lady and the young.

The first stroke of eight chimed from a clock somewhere in the distant, backward part of the room.

"We must hurry, my dear—there's dinner!" Mr. Haylesford cried, in genial John-Bullism.

"Hein!—is it so—le diner?" and looking from Mr. Haylesford, who had been her travelling guardian, the girl turned with a quaint touch of timorousness in her eyes to the stranger ladies.

"Yes," said Miss Haylesford. "We will not expect you to change your dress, and Warton shall help you unpack afterwards. Just brush your hair, and come down."

All this was very homely and kind, but Miss Haylesford could not help showing a certain amount of dignity, seeing that dignity was a part of herself; and to a girl who had never been out of Paris in her life until now, the words were so much Greek. To learn English at school, to say a few sentences in a glib non-comprehending fashion—what help is that towards the translation of those long sentences?

"Ah! but I do not understand!" and Christine waved her hands in trouble, and then tightly clasped them together. "I spik English so bad; ah! you spik French for me. I will know, then—I will learn quick! quick! another day!"

These are the sort of words, but who can make a picture of the reality of the girl's distress?

"Diner, diner, en cinq minutes," said Mr. Haylesford loudly, as if she were deaf. "Very dirty!" he showed his hands. "Wash, wash—quick, vite! vite!—Maida, don't be an idiot, speak French to her."

"Ah, Monsieur, I understand," Christine nodded with bright and sparkling eyes. "Monsieur is so good. I am quick; quick! I come in two minutes!"

Then Miss Haylesford, having had a second of time for preparation, gathered up her long unused French, and, in very presentable guise, said something about her niece showing Mademoiselle La Barbe to her room.

So the two girls gathered up the various gear and went out of the room. Nay, they were only just opening the door for

that purpose, when lo ! it was opened from outside by Reeves.

"Dinner is served, ma'am."

So far, so good. Reeves was retiring rather more quickly than his wont, on seeing his young mistress so closely facing him.

He had no sooner turned, than again he was met face to face—this time, by a young man, a fair young man in evening dress. Again, therefore, the girls were stopped.

"Mr. Marmaduke Haylesford, ma'am," Reeves announced.

"Ah !" even the languid and the world-travelled Duke was uttering this ejaculation in sheer surprise. Matilda, with her arms laden, was in front of him, and also the brightest, daintiest, quaintest French girl.

"We must fly, Duke !" was Maida's cry. How lovely was the girl in her fairness, and under her pretty, rosy excitement ! "But I'll introduce you—this is my cousin," she said to her companion in French, "Marmaduke Haylesford and—Duke, Mademoiselle La Barbe. Now, we must be quick, Mademoiselle !"

Duke made his bow gravely enough. But he looked at the two girls running upstairs, and looked with a pleasant smile upon his face.

He strolled into the drawing-room, and lazily sinking into a chair, said as lazily, "So—that is the companion, eh. A dainty little thing—how different to Maida !"

The old lady's eyes quickly answered him. "She is that—Maida gains by the contrast."

"Yes, undoubtedly she does."

Still Duke seemed very weary and languid.

CHAPTER II.

OF course the dinner that night was cheerful enough. Sometimes Mr. Haylesford could be grim and a bit silent, and this doubtless would be accounted for, had his household at such times known that "things in the City" had been dull and flat, if not worse. But Jonathan Haylesford never talked business at home to the ladies ; he was nothing, if not chivalrous, and he would never have dreamt of passing his evenings without giving the greater part of them to the drawing-room, and to such conversation as he considered a drawing-room requires.

Investments, and gold, and stocks, and shares, he held to be utterly out of place for the evening hours.

On that day, he said, he had been taking holiday. He had never even looked in at the office, but had driven off to Victoria early, had had an hour or two's lounging at Dover, some lunch, and then had met Mademoiselle.

As he ended, he bowed in his courtly, old-fashioned way to his young guest.

The answering was gay and bright ; she only half knew what he had said, because, as we have said, her English was but of the school-room sort. For the hour of dinner, she had had very little occasion to use it, for Duke spoke French easily and well, "if," as his aunt said, "he did nothing else !" He was interpreter for Mr. Haylesford, and really on that first night Christine, the companion, was decidedly "prima donna." The girl was only seventeen, a year younger than Maida, but here she was amongst strangers, and, for the first time in her life, in what some people would call a position of servitude.

She felt none of the "servitude," she could not do so with such kindly people. She was thoroughly enjoying herself, being a true woman, and quite cognisant of the fact that she was winning admiration. Yet, though she was so young, and though her head ran a chance of getting turned by this same admiration, the girl was mistress of herself, and unobtrusively, but very surely, continually turned to Miss Haylesford with a little word of bad English, and again with some graceful French politeness that the old lady understood well enough.

Like the school-girl she had so lately been, she made a little curtsy after dinner, when, being nearest the door, she yet waited for Miss Haylesford to precede her.

Her action and her pretty ways had softened the old lady's dignity, and she quickly took Christine's hand and led her with her out of the room. "You must learn English, Mademoiselle, and then we shall manage better," she said, as they went up the stairs.

"Ah, Madame ! I fear I will learn English slowly," answered Christine, shrugging her shoulders and lifting her eyebrows. "Everyone will speak French so well ! I will only always speak French !" and she gave a little flourish with one hand.

Miss Haylesford laughed. The little piece of flattery was very nice—yes, she did feel elated that her half-forgotten French had come out so well. She tapped the girl's shoulder with her fan and said, "Now run up to your room, and Warton shall come

and help you. Come down in half-an-hour." This was managed in French somehow; perhaps it is as well not to reproduce it too exactly.

Christine was gay. "Yes, yes, I spik English maintenant. I open my box, I take ma robe et je—"

"No, no—you are not to dress," explained Maida. "Only unpack, and let Warton, aunt's maid, help you. And come down here to us in half-an-hour."

"Oui, oui—tout-de-suite"—she ran up laughing.

But we cannot possibly go on in this fashion, giving detail after detail; days and weeks went on, and Christine was always charming. All her little history was told; and of the Haylesford history, such as it was, she also knew all.

Really, that last-named history was nothing. There had been many Haylesfords, who had been bankers and heads of the same house, which a certain James Haylesford now ruled. James was the elder brother of Jonathan; he was the father of the young man Marmaduke; he was a widower, living a luxurious life between chambers, and club, and office. "Home," if ever young Marmaduke became sentimental over such a word, would mean to him the house in Wexford Terrace, and another house in Hertfordshire, "The Cedars;" in fact, it would mean where his uncle, and aunt, and Maida were at home.

The old time-worn idea had rooted itself in the minds of the two brothers—does it not run on the very surface of the story?—Marmaduke and Matilda must marry each other.

Long years ago, nay, when Maida was first born and Marmaduke wearing his first jacket, the fathers had talked and laughed over the princely house which might be established, if those same babies would "fall in love." Happily that time-honoured notion of "falling into love" was to be a *sine qua non*.

Now Maida was eighteen, and no hint of such a dream had floated across her maiden's vision. As to Marmaduke, he was a man, and manly enough, though he liked to indulge in shows of languor and laziness. His father had many a time said a word on the subject, and together they had laughed and let it drift away.

The old man was cunning—he meant to have his way, but with just that slight hint he meant to stop, and let Marmaduke think he had discovered the idea for himself.

He sent him to travel for a year.

Marmaduke was nothing loth. He inherited no taste for business, and as Dent, the clerk who had been made partner, changing the old firm from "Haylesford Brothers," to that of "Haylesford Brothers and Dent," was likely to be ruler in the future, Marmaduke calmed his easy conscience by telling himself that he need trouble himself about the office scarcely at all.

But Marmaduke was twenty-six, and a man of that age, so his father argued, ought to think of marrying.

Still, he said not one word to his son, he only one day laughed in his dry way as he said to his brother, "The young fool! he'll wake up when he sees Maida snatched up by Milord Tomnoddy! She's a beautiful girl, your Maida!"

"Plenty of time, plenty of time, James. Maida is not in such a hurry to fly away!"

And then each brother put on his hat, and, stepping into his cab, drove off to his home and his dinner.

James's home was his club.

In Jonathan's home he found everything topsy-turvy, so to speak. It was June now, and already there were signs of London growing too hot, and beginning to empty itself. In a week many houses would have their shutters closed, painters perhaps at work, anyhow deserted by "the family."

The Haylesfords gave a ball on that night, and in less than a week they would be away at The Cedars.

Men were in possession arranging rooms; a florist's cart was at the door and plants were being carried in, presently to appear massed in gorgeous tropic bloom and leafage. Already a landing, which the master could see, was finished—a fairy-land of flowers and quaint Eastern lanterns.

CHAPTER III.

NIGHT came.

The great drawing-room was softly ablaze with tinted lights. A gently moving throng, for a dance was just over, was moving adown its magnificent length. Maida, tall and fair, seemed the centre of the crowd, but, as she moved slowly, leaning on Duke's arm, she was utterly unconscious of that prominence of herself.

She wore creamy white, with the sheen of satin, and pearls, and lace about her:

a string of pearls round the pillar of her throat was her only jewel. Her own brilliant fairness was only more brilliant above this white decking, though some might think that the contrary would have been the effect. No, she herself dominated, and for the crown of her queenhood there was sunny, rippling, gold hair, with its warmth of brown shadows.

Ah! and she had other colouring, new colouring. Within the deep blue of her eyes was the gladness the gay scene about her might naturally evoke. There was also a new light.

That light was the light of love—yes, assuredly it was.

Only that morning had Marmaduke come in, bringing her flowers for the evening—he had done so many a time before—but on that morning, as she had stood thanking him, he had said a word, only a vague word:

“Should I not always bring the best I can for you, Maida?”

Really the literal words had been nothing, but Marmaduke had—one can so easily do this when one has the mind to do it—set a subtle meaning within their simple sound.

And so, with Marmaduke her partner again and again, the evening was wearing away, and Maida was in the sweet dream-land of love. Love that as yet is not robbed of its ethereal phantasy, that as yet is visionary, cloudy, ecstatic, and not wholly a thing to be clasped because—because a plain-spoken word has not made it a thing of earth.

Marmaduke—here is an interlude, to explain what may appear a sudden move on the part of this young man, who was so sunnily satisfied with things as they had been—Marmaduke had all at once, within the last few days, dropped his lazy ease. By himself and to himself, he had looked at things as the past few weeks had drifted them about him.

He had simply amused himself just one degree too much on one line.

He pulled himself up, told himself that he must change. He must play no more, he must—nay, he had pleasure in obeying that “must”—dally no longer, but set himself to win his beautiful cousin for his wife.

Music began again—the dreamy voluptuous swaying of waltz music came from the distance.

Maida drew her hand from within her cousin's arm, and it fell half-languidly, meeting its fellow. The girl's whole being was in an ecstasy, which set her as it were in an unreal world. The head was slightly bent, but no such bending could lessen the distinguished maidenly majesty of her carriage.

Two people were in front of these two. One, a tall dark man, as handsome in his sombre-hued manliness as Maida was in her maiden whiteness, was coming towards her with upright bearing, even with a sort of haste.

The second person in front was at some distance, but looking vivaciously forward. This was Christine. She was dark and spirituelle always. On that night her black lace dress and her crimson exotics intensified all that. She was gaily flourishing a fan of crimson feathers towards a man who evidently had been her partner, and whom she was dismissing.

And the next moment Maida was by the side of the dark man, and moving down the length of the room. She seemed not much to care to dance, neither did her companion care for it one jot; he only wanted her by his side—wanted to feel the light touch of her hand on his arm, to hear the soft, sweet, gentle tones of her voice.

While he and Maida let the dancing slip by, other folks were doing the same.

Here was an instance. Lying by the side of the dancing-room was a small room—really Miss Haylesford's sanctum. In this were luxurious seats, flowers, dim rosy lights—the very perfection of a nook for flirtation.

And Marmaduke with Christine La Barbe were flirting to their hearts' content. You see, the humour of each was just of the right sort to indulge in that probably harmful amusement.

Neither meant any harm. Marmaduke ought to have known better; Christine was a French girl, and as such, would at home have been under rules and regulations of a different sort to that which obtain in an English home. Here she was in England, and with her whole heart enjoying herself. Perhaps she was a bit of a butterfly—a girl who is only just seventeen may be that, and yet may have the making of a noble and wise woman in her.

The dance was over; people strolled in and out; people passed and repassed the door of this little room as they loitered in the long conservatory, into which both drawing-room and morning-room had an

entrance; people—but these last were only two—even leaned against the foliage-hidden doorpost and talked.

In the intervals of this talking they could hear—nay, it came about that one of these two forgot her companion's words in the agony of listening.

"After to-night you will not know me."

This was in Marmaduke Haylesford's voice.

"No? And why shall I not know you? Do you wear a disguise?" Christine asked; and one can easily fancy how she was setting her gay head on one side, comically puzzled.

"Even that might be," he said, dreamily.

"How funny! But Monsieur is grave; will the disguise be for sadness?"

"It will not be for—for this sort of thing."

This was said quickly and gruffly.

"This-sort-of-thing?" the girl mused.

"This"—she accented the word—"is nice. You say 'nice,' not 'agréable,' Monsieur?"

"Naughty but 'nice'"—he laughed—"but when we get down to The Cedars it will be different. But"—and here the young man seemed to pull himself together—"whatever I seem, Christine, remember I am always your good friend, your true friend."

"You make a mystery, Monsieur. I did never doubt that, mon ami. I will say 'mon ami.' I feel more when I say that than when I say 'my friend.'"

"Men say it always——"

At that moment Captain Burwood, Maida's partner, saw that she was not listening to him, and saw also that her fairness, which in his eyes was so lovely, had given place to a burning colour.

"It is so hot here," he said.

"Yes—no; I am so cold. Let us come amongst the people."

Maida said this in a tone louder than her usual voice, and, as she moved, her manner was altogether more determined, more sharp, more alert than her companion would have deemed possible for the suave, sweet grace of Matilda Haylesford.

He wondered a little. Does one ever know the real truth of a girl? he thought.

CHAPTER IV.

THE house in Wexford Gardens was left to its housekeeper, and that which was known as The Cedars was full.

Duke went down with the ladies. Why not? He was son and brother of a sort,

but, being cousin too, was not everything going to be merged in a closer tie?

So he told himself. So, too, the servants, who know so much more always than we let ourselves believe they do, had long ago settled. He was "the young master."

Very soon the house would be full of guests. So on that very evening of arrival Marmaduke, sitting with his uncle, propounded his marriage project.

He felt so sure of Maida, that it could not matter getting over this formality before he spoke the literal word to her. She understood, so Duke pleased himself by thinking, else why did she not laugh with him as easily that day as she had done all the days before the ball? The ball had tired her, perhaps London had tired her.

But on the first morning when he knew she would be out in the gardens before breakfast, he would be up too, and would find her, and would—win her.

Did he?

No, he did not. The programme was exactly carried out, with the exception of that final clause.

Maida coloured rosy, as Duke made his confession and so warmly pressed his offer.

Duke really meant all he said.

But something had altered Maida's sweet gentleness. We may guess as we like; but assuredly it is not for us to speak our guesses when the girl herself, seeming to entrench her resolve behind the fiveness of her words, would say so little. In very truth, one short sentence which she spoke at first is the best that we find it possible to give of the more broken, more troubled bits of sentences which came when Duke would again and again pray her to give him a reason.

The rosy, quick colour was fading as she spoke:

"I cannot say a reason, Duke. I am not sure that I exactly know a reason. I am only sure that I cannot say I will be your wife." She was pale when she ended, and her voice had fallen to low sadness.

Duke left The Cedars, and after he was gone it was strange to see how Maida altered entirely. She and Christine changed characters—Maida was alert, gay, lively, always planning and carrying out schemes of summer pleasure.

The first set of visitors who came down declared that Maida's season had done her all the good in the world; it had fired that extreme sweetness and gentleness of hers with a light of electric brilliancy, that made her simply perfect.

Naturally, behind so much that was brilliant, Christine fell into shadow. Still, for a gay girl to be so utterly shadowed argues some dulness of spirit within herself.

Maida was telling herself that her dream of love was over. Never more would she let herself drift into visions of that sort; neither would she cry her secret upon the housetops, or pose as a love-lorn maiden—no, least of all that!

So here was the history of her gaiety. When the gaiety ceased—for it is too wearing a part to play long—she seemed to become a little careless, a little haughty; but even then, with the flush of some new scene touching her, she was again the brilliant young hostess.

The summer and autumn went slipping by with their pleasant doings.

All the time Duke remained absent. They heard at The Cedars that he had gone to Norway, fishing; but seeing one does not stay in those Northern latitudes when even England begins to cry out against October gales, one might look for him, surely. Not at all. The next that was heard of him was that he was travelling through Russia, was going down to Constantinople, might winter in Egypt.

"And I think Englishmen are like no other nation when they begin to travel." So said Christine when, one morning, she was sitting in Miss Haylesford's room doing some millinery for her. It had been the evening before that Mr. Haylesford had brought down the news of Marmaduke's roving, and the old and young lady were chatting over it. Miss Haylesford was at her writing-table busy with account-books. She talked in an enjoyable, scrappy fashion, but she rarely turned round to look at her companion.

"You French people stay at home more—three legs of mutton in one week, never!—no, my dear, no; and it's odd in Duke just now."

"Just now!—you say 'just now,' Madame. Is it a reason that—"

"H'm," the old lady went on, half to herself. "I've a good mind to see Wallis myself. I'll not be imposed on." Suddenly she turned round in her chair. "You don't mean to say, Christine, that you have been blind? Do you not know what—what we all are expecting!—every day expecting! And he to stay away!"

"No, I do not know, Madame. Is it about Monsieur Marmaduke?" She tweaked her bows, and with her dainty

brown head on one side, was evidently giving the larger half of her mind to her work. Christine had had her amusement, but to her it had been but amusement.

"You never saw it?"

"Monsieur is—ah! that? You mean he will wish to marry Maida! Ah! and it is his father and Maida's father who will not arrange it. But, Madame, you have power. Are you not like Maida's mother?"

"Bless the girl! Am I to sue for him—to tell that Maida is wearing her soul out for him? Ah! you will not repeat that, Mademoiselle—that must not be said of my niece."

"Assuredly no, Madame. My lips are silent. And is it so with Maida? Ah! ma chérie! but I grieve. What is there of sorrow in the world like that?"

"What do you know of such things, Christine?"

The old lady was testy, perhaps, because she was disappointed in the whole mystery of Marmaduke's disappearance, and having once spoken, found a relief in catching up somebody's remark sharply.

"Ah, Madame, I do know!"

"You!—a child like you?"

Christine's quick wits saw the mistake. She laughed brightly.

"No, Madame, not myself. But I remember, ah! I cry when I let myself see Sophie. She was my sister. She was five years older than I am. She had an attachment—ah! there was the misfortune—the attachment. She gave her love, and it was for her a grande passion. My father had arranged a marriage for her that was quite another thing. Ah!"

The girl lifted her hands with a gesture of grief.

"You do not mean to say that they married her to one man when she loved another!" cried Miss Haylesford.

"Oui, Madame, oui." Now could Christine speak English then?

"Thank Heaven I am an Englishwoman! They did that?"

"It is too much grief to talk now!" Christine exclaimed.

"But a father to—"

"A girl must obey her father, Madame. And my father had promised Sophie to M. Simon for his son Etienne so many years—chère Sophie!"

"French custom!" and Miss Haylesford jerked herself with haste back to her writing-table. Excitement had robbed her of her usual dignity. "And your parents

"You come here to England. How could I be sure——?"

"My mother was glad that I come, Madama. There is no fear here. I am here. Could a Française make a grande passion for an Englishman?"

"Well, I do not see why not!" with a touch of offence.

"Les messieurs—all—are so kind. They say great flatteries, they amuse much. Ah! yes—but a grande passion is not for that. No, Madama. And I always remember Sophia. I will have no more till my father arranges a marriage for her."

"Very good."

And at this point Christine had evidently worked herself warm, for her face burnt crimson, and one must suppose that she altogether found the subject too much for her, for she shook her lap free of shreds, and springing up, cried, in quite a changed tone, that was a funny mixture of self-satisfaction and demureness:

"Does not Madame like the cap? Is it not charming, now?"

Maida came in from the gardens with a girl who was a neighbour. She carelessly threw her hat on to the table, and herself into a rocking basket-work chair.

"Do just look at her, Miss Haylesford!" the girl cried. "Isn't it all affectation? Making out she cares neither for that nor for anything else!"

"And what specially is it now that you would have her care for?" Here Miss Haylesford's dignity was at its normal height.

"You have not heard?"

"How should she or any one hear, seeing that the mighty decision has only come to our knowledge within the last half-hour?" Maida said carelessly.

"Did I not see that our two fathers were plotting something? And do you think I could allow mine to keep a secret from me? I should think not, indeed!" was Maud Taylor's cry.

"Are we to know the mystery?" asked Miss Haylesford.

"The loveliest notion!" Maud said. She was a neighbouring squire's only daughter, a young lady of the go-ahead type, who was always wishing that Nature had created her a boy. She was the very opposite of Matilda Haylesford, but had been her friend from days of babyhood. "We are to go to the Riviera, perhaps to Italy, perhaps to Madrid, and not come back

till the spring—the two families, I mean. And start at once, too!"

"Well!" Miss Haylesford's breath was almost knocked out of her by the energy of the girl.

"It is more than 'Well'—it is 'Better,' 'Best' of all things. I'd have stayed to lunch, Maida, but we shall be in an awful scramble. I must look and see what clothes I want. Let us have travelling suits alike—all three alike!" and she took Christine in with a nod. "Blue serge with crimson silk facings, blue straw sailor hats with a crimson ribbon round—"

"I've seen that sort of thing a few times," Maida said quietly.

And Maud Taylor carried herself off in a whirl.

CHAPTER V.

THE thing was done. All the winter was passed under the soft luxuriance of Southern skies. One April morning saw carriages before the door of a Sorrento hotel, and under a scorching sun the party of travellers drove round and about the lovely coast road up to, or rather down to Castellamare.

Gorgeous blue was the sky above them; silvery sparkling blue below were the waters of the Bay of Naples, as they splashed and rippled, and flung their diamond spray against the rocks of the tiny coves and bendings of the shore. Vines were in bloom, orange gardens were in bloom and fruitage all at once—ah! what is like an orange warm with the kiss of the spring sun!

At Castellamare the beautiful drive ended, and the travellers took the train. How many trains they took afterwards one stays not to count; northward and northward they ever journeyed away from the sight of Vesuvius, till they came upon the silver streak of the Channel, and steamed across to the white Dover cliffs.

And it was April still when the Haylesfords said "good-bye" to the Taylors, and drove through London streets up to the house in Wexford Gardens. A spluttering, chancy, sunny April shower greeted them, and Maida laughed as the rain dashed in her face.

Verily, she was no love-lorn maiden! The winter among those soft airs had come to the aid of her own will, and she was telling herself that it could have been no "falling in love" which had mastered her with respect to her cousin, Duke Haylesford. When in Rome she had had an offer of marriage from the Captain

Burwood whom we saw at the dance for one moment. He had followed her so far; but, alack for the poor man! Maida would not have him for her husband.

She and Christine agreed that they would by no means hurry into matrimony. Both seemed to have a vague idea that there must be more of duty than of pleasure in that condition of life. In some such sort of way these two girls talked. Methinks girls do now and again talk in this fashion, and then one day there comes—well, we will let time show what comes.

Individually, this is what came some few moments after to Wexford Gardens. Maida was standing by a window looking out at the dancing rain, and rainbow, and sunshine. People hurried by laughing, with their skirts and their umbrellas blown to the four winds of heaven at one and the same moment.

A hansom drove up rapidly and stopped. Out of it sprang Marmaduke Haylesford. Egypt had tanned him darker than ever. He was a well-knit, handsome figure. He ran up the steps, and before she knew it, Maida was shaking hands with him, rosy red, talking fast about only just "coming in from crossing."

"And I crossed yesterday. I thought I was running after you, and you have been running after me."

"Would I do such a thing?" Maida laughed, and gaily tossed her head.

Christine had run upstairs with her arms full; Miss Haylesford and her brother were somewhere amidst the chaos of trunks and portmanteaux. In the room there was that solitude à deux.

And Maida had made her gay disclaimer.

Duke was evidently bent upon achieving some as yet undeclared point.

He caught her up in his impulsive way:

"Never mind, Maida, we've come to the right order now. I am following you by just—five minutes, is it? What idiots we have been! We have just had a year of misery to no purpose."

"Indeed!"—she tried to recover her coolness—"I have by no means been miserable for a year."

"No? Then I have."

And here he fell into a voluble explanation of his follies and his woes.

"And I am to believe that you will never again be foolish or be miserable?" Of course we are not attempting to give the tenderer words, which filled up a space that we are not worthy to enter. Every

story-teller must pass by some closed door, so to speak, or how else should he give his reader credit for possessing imagination! We take up only these gay rallying speeches:

"Is that to be my part?"

"Yes, just believe that. Of course I am foolish, and weak, and unmanly, and——"

"That will do for the present," she cried. "How nice to be the wife of such a man as that! Come, let us find papa, Duke."

"Maida!"

And here the young man must have had an access of folly, for he actually put his arm round Maida's waist and kissed her.

Perhaps, though, this would be a form of folly she could not quarrel with at that minute.

We gave a vague date of "fifteen years ago" for the opening of our story. Now, suppose that the fifteen years have ~~gone by~~. Of course, it is a good bit more than that time.

It is again spring.

It is the first of May, and some ~~chicks~~ are playing in The Cedars garden. One's a tall, fair girl, very like some one we have seen. She is so tall and slim, that she looks older than she is; she is only fourteen that May-day; she has a big brother who is fifteen—you see our last date must mean very little, only we like to make much out of it. A dark boy of that same age is talking to her, and this boy wears the curious uniform of a French school.

This boy's name is Paul Clémenceau, and his mother is a woman named Christine, who—we really cannot again push in that vague date of "fifteen years ago!"—was "arranged for" in marriage with a certain M. Paul Clémenceau, a Paris barrister. She was sent for from England and was married, and now and again, she and her husband come over to the Haylesfords on a visit.

By-the-bye, hers is just as happy a marriage as if it had only been one of "falling in love," and not "arranged."

"May," says the boy, "you will come to Paris next year."

"Yes, mother sends me to school there—shall I like it?"

"School?" The boy shrugs his shoulders and throws out his hands. "It is possible. You will have holidays, though."

"Yes, and Madame Clémenceau says I may always come to you."

"Jolly!" The boy knows plenty of English, you see. "And then when you leave your school, I shall be coming here to study law; father says it is good to know English law."

"How old we shall be then!" and May falls to plucking at daisies in a funny, grave way.

"Well, don't you want to get old? I do. We can't be married till we are old, can we?"

"No. I suppose not."

So the children talk.

And the four elders happen to be passing by just then, and overhear. They smile at one another. We wonder whether any one of them thinks of the old belief, which goes to say that, where there has been an affection—no, a stroke of flirtation—in past days, there will you find the thing reproduced in a younger generation.

HIS HEART'S DESIRE.

By ELLEN MULLEY.

PART I.

It was a lovers' quarrel, but there had been no renewal of love. Both were young, and, perhaps, not very wise. As was natural, the woman suffered most. The man, turning his back on the old place and the old life, went out into the wider world and learned, or, it may be, thought that he was learning, to forget. While for the girl he left, there seemed nothing to do but to remember. Then; suddenly there had come into her life once more, one who had never forgotten. All the love had been upon his side, it is true; but, still, he had never despaired. His courage, his self-reliance (which was never self-conceit), and his patience were great—even as his love. "Everything comes to him who waits." He had waited; and now that his opportunity was come, he stepped quietly but boldly in to seize it.

More like an overgrown village than a town—despite its name—Great Wick stood, sheltering itself in the hollow's dip as best it could, between miles of almost untrodden moorland and the wild waste of Northern seas. There it dozed or blinked life away according to the season. For, while winter brought its biting winds and furious storms, spring and summer, waking late it might be, brought with them the sunshine and the blue of Southern skies. But the quiet was being

broken in upon just now, and even its winter's slumbers were never likely to be as deep and undisturbed again. A line which had been planned, and indeed, begun, some three years ago to link its fortunes with the outer world, was being worked upon again; and this it was that brought George Butler, C.E., once more upon the scene; once more he took up his abode in the old house "down street," where Mrs. Pitchforth reigned, and almost fell upon his sunburnt neck to see him back.

Further up the hill the Rectory, grey and weather-beaten, like the church to which it seemed to cling, began to see him again almost daily, as it had done before. The Rector, who was grey and weather-beaten like the house and church, welcomed him eagerly back. It seemed to take ten years off his own bent shoulders only to look at the upright, well-knit figure at his side, and to realise, as he heard him talk, that there actually was another life than this—a life whose interests were not altogether bounded by old Tommy Robson, who would get drunk and go to sleep on a tombstone; or young Mrs. Ord, who seemed to be always coming with a new, and altogether unnecessary, baby to be christened. Poor Mrs. Blair, too, the Rector's wife, would look less careworn over the boy's torn jackets, as she heard the cheery tones with her husband's quiet voice in the Rectory passage; and the boys—six in number—would come darting out from all sorts of places at the sound. The Rector's daughter, who loved them all with such an anxious care—the bent father, the poor tired mother, the noisy, healthy, hungry boys—could not but welcome him too, and be grateful to him. But she knew it was not her gratitude George Butler wanted.

As time went on, Janet Blair began to ask herself if it was not possible she could give him something more. Not, perhaps, the love he wanted, but something in its place, that should content him, and, it might be, bring happiness to herself. For if time had not yet brought forgetfulness, it had brought knowledge. Like the Rector, Janet's eyes were opened, and she knew that there was life—bigger, wider life—beyond her own. And it was this man—no longer a very young one—with the firm upright figure, and resolute yet kindly face, who had seen and done so much, who was her teacher.

The pinch of insufficient means, with its accompanying cares and sordidness,

was known at the Rectory, as in humbler houses in the straggling little town below; but it had not greatly troubled her. It was only for the father and mother she had cared. For herself, the quiet, monotonous life had been sweet enough, for love had touched it. But love, she told herself, had gone out of it for ever; and her life stretched before her terrible in its emptiness. There was one who was telling her almost daily, by looks, deeds, words, that he could help her to live it, and even, in time, bring back to it the old fulness—if she would only let him. And he was waiting for his answer. What if she gave him the answer that he wanted? It was autumn when he had first spoken; he had told her he would wait until the spring—and now the spring had come, and he would wait no longer.

Even from that Northern corner, winter, with its wild storms and lingering snows, had at last disappeared. On moor and upland the fresh grass was springing; the golden glory of the gorse was deepening day by day. Over the glen below, which ran inland from the sea, was the tender green of bursting leaves. The beck, free from its frozen chain, chattered on once more. Everywhere, around, overhead, was the song of birds. The sun shone, a soft breeze stirred the waking flowers, the hushed waves crept up, and with a faint ripple kissed the gleaming sands. And over all the blue sky stretched pure, cloudless; for the spring was come!

And George Butler was waiting still. He came in one morning brisk, smiling; he seemed to bring a whiff of the sea, the moors, the spring itself with him.

"I want the boys," he said to the Rector, who had them round him in the bare room that was called his study. "Jack, here, is to begin with a holiday. I have brought him back."

Jack was the oldest and steadiest of the boys, and George Butler had just taken him into his office in the town. The boys threw down their books with a whoop. Butler himself went to look for Janet. He found her in the little sitting-room by the open window, a basketful of appealing socks before her. From the garden beyond the spring sunshine and a little odorous breeze were calling to her; but she worked steadily on. Presently she looked up and saw him standing, big, broad-shouldered, smiling at her in the doorway. Janet found herself smiling too.

"Put those things away," Butler said shortly, with that little tone of command that was natural to him. "We are going to inaugurate Jack's launch in life with a picnic, and it can't come off without you."

Janet hurried the half-mended socks into the basket. Her hands trembled; a pink flush had come into her face. She was telling herself that the time had come. She was wondering, too, if there would be any cold mutton for sandwiches! Poor Janet!

Butler, I think, knew a little of what was in her mind, as to himself, and also as to the cold mutton. He was looking at her with his keen, kindly eyes. What answer, he asked himself, was she going to make him? He should know before the day was much older. Aloud he said:

"You are not to trouble yourself about food, that is my affair—mine and Jack's. We have already ordered the mummy delicacies. I dare say the boys will find fault with the weight of the basket."

It did not take Janet many minutes to say good-bye to Mrs. Blair, and to take the shady, somewhat shabby hat; and presently she was in the garden, where Butler was talking to the Rector, and where the boys were kicking up the pebbles, longing to be off. Janet saw that he had taken her light jacket from its peg in the dark, narrow passage, and had it hanging on his arm. Was he always thinking of her—always caring? What should she say to him—what could she say but "yes!"

Down the hill to the town, where Butler's basket was waiting; over the old, yellow-lichened bridge, under which the beck was hurrying; up that other steep hill-side, which led them to the east cliff's summit—it was by the west the Rectory stood. There was not much need for talking. The way was so steep and rough; the boys danced round the two like so many puppies. Then there was a suitable spot to be found; the cloth to be spread; and the basket made to disgorge its contents. But even hungry boys of the best intentions cannot sit and eat sausage rolls and tarts of solid, though appetising construction, for ever. These young Blairs did all that could be reasonably looked for; but presently—all too soon, as it seemed to one of the lookers-on—there were signs of movement. Irregularly, and perhaps a little reluctantly just at first, the boys strolled off and there remained nothing between

the two thus left silently facing one another, but the fragments of the feast. Butler got up and gave them a disdainful, somewhat ungrateful poke.

"I don't think this adds much to the beauty of the scene," he said. "Shall we stroll a little higher up?"

The soft, green summit of the cliffs went sloping gently upwards. The two went walking side by side, still silent, as if unconscious of each other's presence. Presently they were standing upon the highest point. How fair and peaceful it all was!

"Why could it not always be so?" Janet was asking herself, with a little sigh. "Why should storms and troubles ever come here, or to anyone?"

In the wide-spreading bay the sea shimmered and sparkled in the sun. Here and there in the far, faint blue were the gleam of scarcely-moving sails and the lingering haze from some passing steamer.

Inland stretched the golden glow of gorse, green valleys, waving woods. Nearer home, farm-buildings, time-stained, red-roofed, nestled, half hidden in the pink flush of blossoming orchards. Presently, from quite close at hand, clear, musical, came the first cuckoo's call. Then Butler spoke:

"Hark!" he said. "Do you know what he says—what it all says?" He did not wait for his companion to answer. He knew she understood him. "What are you going to say to me?" he went on. "What answer are you going to give me?"

Janet's heart was beating hard. She could not speak, she could only think. What answer was she going to give him? The keen grey eyes she knew so well were looking steadily into hers. Suddenly between her and them there came a pair of soft, rather sleepy brown ones, that she knew so much better—that she had known almost ever since she could remember. Her own fell; her face took a half-guilty flush.

"Can't you forget all that?" Butler said, who read her thoughts. "Can't you let me help you to forget it?"

"I know how good you are," Janet said weakly.

"I want to be good to you, if you will only let me; to make you happy. If I want a little happiness for myself too, is that so very wonderful?"

"Do you care for me so much?" poor Janet cried, with something like a sob.

Butler caught her hand, and drew her gently to him.

"My dear," he cried, "I care for you so much that——" the strong man's voice was trembling, the resolute face bent down to hers was wistful, tender.

Janet did not draw her hand away; she could not. She could not send this brave, faithful heart from her. It was love that her life wanted, and where could she look to find again such faith, such tenderness? To Butler hope was already coming. Presently his close-shut lips parted with a smile.

"Well!" he said.

Then Janet, who could not help herself, who thought she was going to cry, found herself smiling too.

"That's all right," Butler said, and drew the passive hand he had been holding through his arm.

"But I have not said anything!" the girl cried, still smiling.

"You have said enough," George answered sturdily, and stooped down and kissed the flushing cheeks.

And then it seemed to Janet that it was all settled—settled for her, and that she had had very little to do with it. When the boys after awhile came trooping back, eager for the production of the cake providently reserved for some such moment of starvation, the sun was already dropping to the west. Half an hour later the retreat was sounded. Down the heathery slope, and over the old stone bridge once more; into the straggling street, and past the dozen or so of shops, and the one hotel, "The George and Crown," on the steps of which a young man was standing. He was a young man, with a brown, pleasant face, and soft, brown, rather sleepy eyes. He was smoking a cigar, and appeared to be on the lookout for some one or something. Presently he spied the returning group: the big, broad-shouldered man; the girl; the skipping, chattering boys. When they came opposite to him he raised his hat, his face reddened. Butler lifted his hat.

"There is Frank Archer," he said.

Janet bowed.

The boys rushed over to him. Where did he come from? Why had he been away so long? Was he come back to stay?

"I have been knocking about," the young man said a little awkwardly, "and I am come to stay at the old place."

The old place, as the boys knew, meant the queer, rambling house about a mile away, where Archer's uncle lived, and where he himself had been brought up. And then Frank, too, began asking questions.

"How long had George Butler been back, and was he always about with them like that? He had just heard that he was very friendly at the Rectory."

"He comes every day," Jack said, "or nearly every day. And he has taken me into his office, and I am going to tack C.E. on to my name one of these days, Master Frank."

"Yes," said Frank absently, who had no ambitions, only an income. After this he did not seem inclined to say much more; and presently the young Blairs left him, shouting out their good-nights, as they clattered up the echoing, almost empty street. Janet and Butler were nearly home. Neither seemed inclined for talking, or perhaps it was the way which was too steep. In the Rectory garden the Rector was smoking his solitary pipe. He met them at the gate.

"Come in, Butler."

"Can't, sir, thanks," George said shortly. "When a man plays all day he must work all night—or at least a part of it."

The Rector turned away a little disappointed.

"Was that right?" Janet's companion asked.

"Was what right?"

"Not to come in. Archer may come up with the boys, and I thought, perhaps—you have not met for so long, not since——"

"Not since we said good-bye two years ago," Janet said quietly. "But I don't think he will come to-night."

"He will come to-morrow, then."

"And if he does?" said Janet softly.

Butler had drawn her towards him, and was holding her in his strong embrace. "And if he does? Tell me," he echoed.

Janet hesitated a moment, then looked up into the tender, questioning face. "If he does," she whispered, "I have given you your answer."

PART II.

FRANK ARCHER went up to the Rectory the next morning, for, of course, it was his old playmate and love that he had come to Great Wick to see. He was feeling a little awkward, a little foolish even, and not at all certain as to what he was going to do or say. He found the Rector's daughter in the old-fashioned and rather neglected garden. She was in her favourite seat, under the oldest and crookedest of the apple-trees. The faint sweet smell of the opening

blossoms came to him sweeter and more familiar with every step.

By the time he reached her it seemed to him that he had never been away.

"You are not surprised to see me," he began. "You knew I should come—after last night, I mean."

"Yes, I supposed we should see you," Janet answered. "Papa is busy, as usual, with the boys, but mamma——"

"You know it is not them I have come to see," Frank said reproachfully, his face darkening.

Janet made no answer. She would have given a good deal just then to have seen poor Mrs. Blair's well-worn alpaca gown coming up the straggling, untidy path.

"I knew I should find you here," Frank went on, "and mending one of the boys' jackets, of course."

And then Frank laughed and felt a little more comfortable, and presently found courage to ask if he might not sit down—which meant in the old seat by Janet's side.

As she made room for him he caught her hand:

"You are going to forgive me?" he said gently.

"You must not talk to me like that," Janet said. "And please give me back my hand. How do you think I am to get on with my work?"

"You are not going to forgive me, then," the young fellow persisted, half incredulous, half wistfully.

"We were both wrong," Janet answered gently. "Let us say no more about it. It is so long ago. Let us forget it."

"It is my fault, I know," cried poor Frank. "I deserve it all. Oh! Janet, don't you think you could care for me again? It has been such a wretched, miserable time." The lad, who was really believing all he said, went on: "I have always meant to come back. Don't tell me it is too late."

The soft brown eyes that she had seemed to see for a moment yesterday were really looking into Janet's now, and there was something very like tears in them. What ever had come between them he was her old playmate still. What could she say to comfort him? She laid the torn jacket carefully across one of the grey moss-covered boughs.

"Frank," she said, and put her hand gently on one of his; "I am glad to have you back. Nothing can ever undo the old friendship, but nothing can ever make it more than that again. Do you understand,

dear ! I, too, have been miserable enough. If I have found some happiness, will you be the one to grudge it me ?”

“It is Butler, then !”

Frank Archer's good-looking, sunburnt face was close to his companion's fair one. Her bright, rippling hair almost touched his cheeks ; her hand white, slender, still laid on his. The old apple-tree, with its gnarled pink blossom-laden arms, opened itself about the two, and framed them in.

Someone coming up the irregular grass-grown walk stopped a moment to look at the unconscious pair. Then he came on. His footsteps reached them at last, and they turned to look at the intruder. It was George Butler who was approaching. Butler raised his hat, came steadily on with his firm, half-soldierly tread, and then, with a little nod to Archer, stooped gravely down, and laid his bearded lips to Janet's flaming cheeks.

Poor Frank ! He got up at once, looking very red indeed.

“I think this is your seat,” he said grimly to the new-comer, and with a stiff little bow to his late companion, walked away.

Butler took the vacated seat quite calmly, and then possessed himself of the but just released hand. He felt it trembling as it laid in his. He saw that Janet was looking after the slowly retreating figure with troubled, wistful eyes.

“One must be cruel to be kind sometimes,” he said softly. “I have lived so much longer than you, dear, in this criss-cross old world, and it is one of the lessons I have learned.”

“Poor Frank !” the girl said, with something like a sigh. “I don't think I could ever be very cruel to him. I have known him for so long—ever since he was quite a little lad.”

“And you have never known me anything but a big, rough man ?” And Butler pretended to sigh too.

Janet laughed.

“Yes, I can never think of you as anything but a big—no, not rough—brave man ; to be a little bit afraid of now and then, perhaps, but always to trust in, to be proud of.”

Butler's quiet face, with its firm, almost rugged features, was transformed—a smile played upon his lips, an eager light came to his grey eyes.

“Is that really how you feel ?” he cried. “My dear little girl ! And I was beginning to be jealous. You will have to be good

to me, you know, Janet, though I am such a big fellow. You see, I have been used to having my own way all my life, and I like it. I am apt to be something of a Grand Turk now and then, when I can't get it ; so you are warned. I am going to find the Rector now, and frighten him into giving me his daughter. I wonder what Dick will say !”

Dick was number three, and Janet's special boy. Dear, jealous, twelve-year-old Dick, with the fair, tumbled hair ; round, rosy cheeks ; angel voice ; and oh, such dreadfully active arms and legs. It was his torn jacket over which Janet was smiling now.

“As for Archer,” Butler was saying, “we shall be seeing him here again by the evening, and in a day or so he will be here all day long ; very miserable, no doubt, but enjoying it all nevertheless.”

It happened almost as Butler had said. But not quite. Frank did not appear at the Rectory again that day, but he was there the next, and the next, and, indeed, the next ! He was there not only all day, but every day. It was the old time over again. It was the old time to him, that is ; to Janet, that could never come again. She certainly was not cruel to him. She treated him as the old friend and play-fellow ; as she would have treated Jack if he had been sick and sorry for himself. Perhaps it might have been better for him if she had carried out Butler's sterner code of discipline. But that, as she had confessed, she could not bring herself to do. Butler himself meant to be considerate—to make allowances ; but he, too, treated poor ousted Frank very much as he did one of the older boys ; took his appearance as a matter of course ; greeting him in a free and friendly fashion enough, but putting him aside in a fashion equally frank and friendly when he found him in the way, as he not unfrequently did.

Archer did not return the friendliness. That had been all very well in the old days. Now he preferred to be distantly and frigidly polite ; at times, it must be confessed, he was only sulky—of both of which conditions Butler appeared equally unconscious. He was, however, beginning to tell himself that the Rectory had seen about enough of Mr. Archer ; that it might be better for all, perhaps, if for the future it saw a little less of him. He was turning over in his mind how he could best convey so much to Janet, when an event occurred which for the time stopped further action.

Business suddenly called Butler away, and kept him away for nearly three weeks. He left more unwillingly than he would have cared to own. Time, and even events, as we all know, can go on very well without us. It is we, sometimes, who suffer.

It was the evening of the day of Butler's return. He made his way at once to his own quarters, where he found Mrs. Pitchforth looking out for him, and the fatted calf, so to speak, ready to be served.

"Glad to see you back, sir," Mrs. Pitchforth remarked for the second time, as, the feast spread, she gave the table-cloth a final and wholly unnecessary pat.

"Thank you, Mrs. P.," Butler made answer, also for the second time.

Mrs. Pitchforth squinted at the unoffending cloth, and then administered another and still more superfluous pat.

"Going up to the Rectory this evening, Mr. Butler, sir, if I may make so free?"

Butler turned in his chair and looked in his landlady's motherly face. "What is it, old woman?"

"Oh! there ain't nothin' amiss, not as I knows on. But there," she went on hurriedly, "I should jest go up if I was you, sir. Miss Janet 'll be lookin' out for you; and there ain't a truer or a loviner' art. But Mr. Frank—well, you see I've known 'em both from quite little 'uns, and he ain't nothun' better than a hot-headed lad even now. And—well it ain't no use beating about the bush, and it's time you was back, and that's the truth."

Honest Mrs. Pitchforth had "done" for George Butler ever since he had first come to Great Wick, and to her he was the best and most wonderful of gentlemen. Butler, on his part, had a great respect and even admiration for his landlady. He was accustomed to her advice and interference in his affairs; it was only a part of her care of him, and he took it all as a matter of course.

"Well, Mrs. P.," he now said, when she had come to a stop, "if you have quite finished, you can retire."

"Tain't nothun' to laugh at, sir!"

"No," Butler said, "but I can't cry with you in the room."

Then Mrs. Pitchforth took her departure. George Butler did not go up to the Rectory that night, as he had certainly intended. He sat smoking his pipe in Mrs. Pitchforth's dim, low-ceilinged room instead.

Smoking and thinking. Thinking of all that had happened in the past few weeks,

of Mrs. Pitchforth's words, and telling himself that he would go to Janet the first thing in the morning. But when morning came, the first thing he did was to look in at the office close by. He found Jack already there with the place to himself, and hard at work drawing engines of unheard-of power all over a sheet of office blotting-paper.

"Hullo!" Jack cried, and jumped down from his high stool.

"Well, Jack! how goes it?"

"Oh, all right—down here, that is," Jack corrected himself.

"What do you mean?" asked Butler, sharply.

"Eh! oh! well up there, you know," and Jack gave his head a little jerk.

"What about up there, can't you speak out?"

"Yes, I can," said Jack unexpectedly, "and it's about time someone did. I—in fact I thought of writing to you," and Jack put his hands in his pockets, and drew himself up in a very business-like way indeed.

Butler, who was standing with his back to the room looking out of the window, made no answer.

"It is that fellow, Archer," Jack went on, "not but what I like Frank; but it's sickening, that's what it is! What's he always moping about our place for, so that one can't get a word with one's own sister?"

Still George Butler made no answer.

"Are you going up now, sir?"

Butler turned. "No," he said slowly. "I am going up to Bowlby to see how the work gets on." Then the door swung to after him, and Jack went thoughtfully back to his high stool and his engines.

Butler found everything going on satisfactorily at Bowlby, where the new line was being made. By two o'clock his inspection was finished, and he was ready to start for home. Then someone unexpectedly stayed him, and it was three o'clock before he was set at liberty. He had come over the cliffs from Great Wick, leaving the longer and not always available route by the sands for his return. And now as he set his face towards home, time and tide, the unlooked-for delay, had alike passed from Butler's mind.

He was busy with his own affairs. Mrs. Pitchforth's motherly warning, Jack's bluntly expressed dissatisfaction, what did they mean? Had he still been blind—too confident in himself? What if this young

girl's heart had never been really his? And what, ah! what, if meaning to be true, the old love, and latterly the return of the old life, had been too strong for her? If that were so—and it came upon him suddenly now with a horrible force that it was so—there remained only one thing to be done. He was a man given to the having of his own way, even to the cutting of it through the untrodden and almost unknown wilds of far-away continents, and he liked it, as he had said. But not to the having it at the cost of those he loved. "His heart's desire" meant something more to him than that. It was not Janet Blair only he had set his heart upon winning; it was her heart he had meant to win; her happiness he had meant to make his own. If he had failed in that, he had failed in all. He had asked for bread—what if it were a stone that had been given him? Suddenly something, the cry of a sea-bird, the fall of loose shale from the cliff's face, perhaps, startled him, and brought him to himself. He looked around him. He was walking much nearer the cliff's foot than he had any idea of, and close upon his other hand—the sea! Wave upon wave the tide was rushing in, sweeping itself fiercely back, only to spring with a hungrier roar upon the fast lessening sands. Its sullen thunder was in Butler's suddenly awakened ears plainly enough now. For a moment even his brave heart stood still. He gave one look behind him. The last point that he had passed in the curving bay, lay hidden in a wild swirl of waters. On his left rose the tall cliffs, straight and sheer, with scarce foothold for a bird. At his right was the hurrying sea—wide, desolate, with not a sail in sight. His one chance of escape lay before him, and in a quarter of an hour or less, even that would be lost to him. Butler tore off coat and waistcoat, and prepared himself to run. It was a race between himself and death, and he knew it. He had lessened the distance by some hundred yards, when there came a cry, not a sea-bird's this time, not his fancy merely, for it came again—faint, but unmistakable. It was his own name, Butler heard. He stayed his steps as though he had been shot. At the cliff's foot, almost at his own, half sitting, half lying, as if he had fallen there, was the man he had been thinking of but a few moments since—Frank Archer!

"Good Heaven! man," Butler panted, "what are you doing here? Get up, lad, for your life!"

"I can't," Archer groaned. "I have

broken my ankle, I think—slipped on the rocks." His face was white and drawn, he looked as if he were going to faint.

The elder man stood looking round him for one moment—no living thing in sight! The next he was down on his knees by his companion, his back towards him.

"Put your arms round my neck," he said quietly.

"No," cried Frank sharply, the colour rushing back into his face, although the other could not see it. "Save yourself, Butler, you can. I ought never to have called you back. Say good-bye, old fellow, and—and if I have not made myself very pleasant lately——"

"You're making yourself a deal more unpleasant now, and as time is short and I have no particular fancy for being drowned"—and without waiting to complete his sentence, Butler had got Archer, passive now, upon his back, and was running for the lives of two. Running his very hardest—death at his side keeping up with him step for step. Nearer and nearer the hungry waves, until at last they bathed them in their spray—the distant point that lay between them and safety distant still. Bit by bit the line of rocks that formed the barrier of the bay was swallowed up and lost, and still on with straining eyes and short, sharp-drawn breaths, Butler panted beneath his burden. There was no word between them. Nearer and nearer still—the awful sea about their very feet now. Nearer, a little nearer, the distant point. But what of that? Dear Heaven! what of that with all hope gone—lost with the last dark glistening head of rock—where for a moment the sunshine played—beneath the swirling waters!

Then, for the first time, Butler stopped. Archer slipped from his shoulders to the wet sands and sat, his face covered with his hands. Butler stood stiff, upright, no sign upon his rugged face; his arms crossed upon his still heaving breast. And then—then into the broad sunshine round the distant point, there crept a red-brown sail.

PART III.

IN the Rectory garden Janet was waiting for her lover. The afternoon was wearing into evening and still he did not come. Janet went over to the low, broken-down old wall from which beyond the fields and cliffs a wide view stretched of heaving sea, darkening now in the fading light. She knew that he was back again,

for Jack had told her; and presently here was Jack himself. He was looking very hot and excited. He could not speak; he stood for a moment scarcely able to draw his breath. The girl put out a hand and caught him by the shoulder.

"What is it?" she cried in a frightened whisper. "Why don't you speak to me, Jack?"

"It's Butler and Frank," gasped Jack. "They've been caught in Deadman's Bay, and Frank—don't, Janet! Janet! they're all right, I tell you," cried poor, scared Jack.

"Go on," said Janet hoarsely.

"Oh yes, I'll go on; but you scared me going white like that, and Butler particularly said I was not to frighten you."

Janet gave a faint smile.

"That's right," said the boy. "Here, lean against the wall."

And then Jack told his story.

"Oh, Janet!" he cried, his young eyes flashing, "what a brick he is! Frank says he believes he might have saved himself at the very last, if he only would have left him. And fancy old half-seas-over Robson coming along in the very nick of time. He may go to sleep on all the tombstones at once if he likes after this." The next moment Jack threw up his hat with a shout. Butler was coming up the path. His face was set and grave. He gave a quick, keen look from Jack to Janet—Janet, whose face had gone white again—whose lips were trembling.

"You have been frightening her," he said sharply.

"I didn't mean to," Jack cried. "I told her you were safe—you and Archer."

"Ah, yes, Archer!"

There was something that sounded like a catch in Butler's breath. He was looking at Janet still, frightening her more than Jack had done. Jack looked a little frightened, too. He knew something of what was amiss. Perhaps he had better not have spoken as he did this morning after all. And presently, feeling not a little guilty, Jack took himself away. Butler's heart was beating in great heavy throbs. Janet had turned from him, and was gazing with unseeing eyes over the sleeping fields, with the darkening sea beyond. Archer's name; Butler's voice; his white, set face had told her all. She was feeling crushed, blinded, helpless. Suddenly, the new sweet life

was gone, and there was nothing left for her to do.

Had the quiet dead close by ever felt like that! she wondered. How peaceful they were now! How peaceful it all was! It was only these two human hearts that throbbed hot, restless, passionate; eager for happiness; crying out in the silence, a little blindly, perhaps, against life, its pain, its disappointments. And still the quiet heavens looked down unheeding of it all. Overhead the stars were already twinkling; behind some distant woods the moon had risen. Not the rustle of a wing in bush or hedge. No sound save the faint lap and ripple of the falling tide. It was Butler's voice that broke the silence.

"Janet," he said gently, "you do not think that I am here to blame you. It is I that have to be forgiven. I ought to have known, to have seen, as others did. But I was wanting my own way, you are dear. I warned you of it on the day when——"

Something in the memory of that day, something in the pretty, girlish face standing a little removed from him; a strange, almost desolate look, drew him a step nearer.

"Janet, my love, my darling, speak to me! Must I go? Is it to be 'good-bye,' or do you bid me stay? Only one word, my dear, to stay or go?"

At his passionate cry the young girl turned.

"Not that, not that!" she cried, and put out soft, entreating hands.

Butler caught them. A moment more and she was sobbing, laughing, on his breast.

Someone was coming up the moonlit path; someone singing in a clear, boyish treble:

"And He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

Butler had heard fair-haired Dick sing it in the old church only three weeks ago. It was Dick's young voice that was singing it now; and Dick himself was presently calling to the two.

"Coming!" Butler cried.

And then unconscious Dick went sauntering back in the moonlight. "And He shall give thee thy heart's desire," went the fresh young voice once more, and presently was lost. But its echoes floated on, not only on the quiet night, but through the happy, hopeful years that smiled beyond it.

"UN BAL DE MI-CARÊME"

By C. G. FURLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARQUIS ALAIN DE LA TRÉMOUILLE was a man of liberal principles. The descendant of one of the oldest houses in France, whose members had intermarried with the Condés and Bourbons, and had thought it no great honour to call the King their cousin, he ought to have been a Legitimist. He was—anything: Orleanist, Republican, Imperialist, Republican again. He served every party that would give him a portfolio and a pension, in return for the ornamental use of his ancient title. He has been Minister of State for almost everything; and as he was impartially ignorant of all the subjects entrusted to him, it cannot be said that he failed more conspicuously in one capacity than another. Finally, he took to diplomacy, and was appointed Ambassador to a South American State, where he distinguished himself greatly, being the very pink of courtesy, and a Past Master in the art of evasion.

It was while he was Minister of Fine Arts that I made his acquaintance. He professed to think it his official duty to patronise journalism, and so lavished a great deal of courtesy on René Michonneau, and somewhat less on me, Georges Froidevaux, his companion on the staff of the "Journal de Tout le Monde." As "Everybody's Journal" was not, unfortunately, so well supported by everybody as its proprietors could have desired, I was both surprised and flattered by the Minister's civility, till Michonneau explained the cause of it according to his cynical views of men and their motives.

"Monsieur de la Trémouille," said he, "is, like many official democrats, a despot in private life. He thinks that in his Château, and for twenty miles around, he should rule as supreme as his ancestors did in the Middle Ages. That might be possible, if he owned the land his fathers then possessed; but being a gambler, and the descendant of three generations of gamblers, very little of it is left to him; and he hates those who have bought any portion of his domain as heartily as if they had stolen it. My father, who was steward to the last Marquis, was foolish enough to purchase some land nearly adjoining the Castle, and thereby incur the wrath of

M. de la Trémouille, who more than hinted that he had gained the means of acquiring an estate by cheating his employer. By way of retort, my father closed a path that led from the Château to the nearest town, directly across his property. The Marquis claimed a right of way, and so they raised one of those great quarrels over little matters, which often form the sole excitement in the monotonous lives of country people. My father likes quarrelling; he enjoys it; it braces his nerves. He had dissensions not only with the Marquis, but with all his neighbours, till, at last, there was no one left to fight with; then, finally, he quarrelled with me. I left his house, came to Paris, became a journalist, and after undergoing the requisite initiation in the art of starving, began to earn my living. Here I met the Marquis de la Trémouille, who took me up, invited me to his house, made much of me—not because he liked me, or cared for literature, but because he hated my father, and knew me to be on bad terms with him. That is the real foundation of his friendship for me; picture to yourself how highly I value it."

"Yet you profess to care for it," I said. "You frequent the Hôtel Trémouille; you go to his official receptions; you talk in your most brilliant style to his uninteresting guests; you even echo his opinions—expressing them better than he can himself—in the journal. What does that mean?"

Michonneau smiled. "Ah, that's different," he answered; "there are reasons, very good reasons. Are you so dull that you cannot comprehend them?"

I did comprehend. My friend's "reasons" were comprised in one personality—that of Charlotte de la Trémouille, the Marquis's beautiful daughter.

"René, you are mad!" I exclaimed. "To let yourself love Mademoiselle de la Trémouille is the height of folly. You are only laying up sorrow for yourself, and, perhaps, for her also. You do not imagine that her father would let her marry you—a bourgeois, a Bohemian, a journalist!"

"I do not imagine it. I know he would forbid such a thing in that grand manner which is the only good quality the ancien régime has transmitted to him; but not because I am all that you say. No; I can picture him pronouncing a paternal benediction on me in the same charming style; and speaking eloquently of the destruction

of caste prejudices; the redemption of errant man through that beautiful institution, the domestic hearth, and the union of rank and letters—as all exemplified in my marriage with his daughter—if I were rich enough. My poverty is my sole, but sufficient demerit. For M. le Marquis is liberal in other things than politics. He spent his own inheritance with the most reckless liberality, then showed his superiority to racial distinctions by bestowing his coronet on Mademoiselle Suzanne Levi, whose pedigree is doubtless longer than his own, but whose income was largely derived from a successful gambling establishment. It was a large income, but not enough for the Marquis, who finally sold his claim to it for an immense sum. This, too, he has spent, and is again in debt. He has but one possession left to sell—his daughter—and she must go to the man who can pay most for her."

"You are aware of all this," I cried, when he paused in his scornful characterisation of the Marquis, "and yet, knowing that your passion is hopeless, you take every opportunity of indulging and increasing it!"

"What does that matter?" he retorted, dropping his listless tone and speaking with all the intensity of the South from which he came. "Does one ask oneself, when one begins to love a woman, if one has any chance of marrying? You may; I do not. I know that to be near her is happiness, to be apart from her is misery; I know that I would sacrifice anything, everything, to be loved by her again. I take my joy while I can get it; I seize it the more eagerly because I know it can last but a short time; and I trust the future and its chances to Providence."

"And if Mademoiselle de la Trémouille loves you, how will it affect her? Is it fair to win a woman's love if you can only break her heart by it? You admit that you cannot marry her. Women of her station and beauty are not permitted to 'coiffer Sainte Cathérine.' The result will be that, while her heart is yours, she will become the wife of some man to whom she is, at best, indifferent."

"Women of her beauty and station, mon ami, are not permitted to marry for love. No one will know how indifferent she is to him better than her husband. That is not my affair, and I do not see why I should sacrifice the little happiness I can now secure for the sake of a personage who is still in the mists of futurity, and whom,

when he appears, I shall detest with all my heart."

"Do you think M. de la Trémouille knows of your passion for Mademoiselle Charlotte?" I asked after a pause, giving up my useless contention.

"Who knows?" answered Michonneau, carelessly. "Who can tell what the Marquis knows? His skill in concealing his knowledge is unsurpassed, even by his skill in concealing his ignorance. If he is conscious of the love between us—for I will admit to you that Charlotte does not forbid my affection—he does not yet think it necessary to check it, not having yet selected his daughter's husband. Meanwhile I am of use to him in publishing opinions in harmony with his own—not to speak of giving him one or two ideas on the subject he is supposed to manage—and my affection for Mademoiselle secures my allegiance."

"Do you think, then, that he plays with his daughter's heart for his own end?"

"Not he! M. le Marquis plays with nothing; he makes use of all things, his daughter included. When she can be employed to better purpose than in merely keeping a poor scribbler in his train, I shall be dismissed in some unforeseen manner, the nature of which I trust entirely to M. de la Trémouille's well-known ingenuity."

Yet I think René was unprepared for the disagreeable form that ingenuity would take.

In the first place there appeared at the Hotel Trémouille a certain Vicomte de Boisjoly, who, it soon appeared, sought the hand of Mademoiselle Charlotte. He was as nearly a nobody as a man with a title could be, for his father had begun life as Jean Jolibois, bricklayer, and did not display, either in looks or manner, any striking illustration of the dignity of labour. But the bricklayer had become a contractor, had made millions, and by judiciously transposing the syllables of his family name, had made it fit to bear with seemliness the title his wealth purchased for him. His son, the Vicomte Alfred, was a very fine specimen of unmanly manhood, undersized, insignificant, cowardly, incapable of even an amusement that made any strain on courage and endurance; yet he was thought to be a fitting husband for proud Charlotte de la Trémouille, with the beauty she had inherited from a long line of noble ancestors enriched by her mother's Oriental grace. She scorned Boisjoly, and swore to René (as he told me) that she would never yield to her father's commands; and it is true

that the Marquis was not able to announce—to his creditors and others—the betrothal that was to save him from ruin, as soon as he desired.

"If this were any other country than France I would carry her off and make her mine," cried Michonneau, in passionate despair; "but our laws are made to suit the tyranny of such parents as M. de la Trémouille, and I cannot marry her without her father's consent."

He was in a very exasperated mood, my poor René, maddened with the thought of the woman he loved being given to a man she hated. All the cynical coolness with which he had intended to view the spectacle had vanished, and his anger, which was ready to display itself in irritation against anyone, made him an easy tool in the Marquis's skilful hands.

At this time the Government was being much abused for its foreign policy, which some condemned as rash, and others as timorous. At one of M. de la Trémouille's official receptions, René was defending this, not perhaps from conviction but from a wish to please his host, who presumably thought the policy wise and right. The Marquis stood listening with a pleasant smile, as those around heard in silence, if not with conviction, Michonneau's passionate, and, indeed, clever arguments; but when these were finished, he turned to one of the bystanders and said:

"And you, M. Enault, what do you think of all this?"

I thought—it might be only fancy—that a glance expressing a secret understanding passed between our host and Enault, the editor of "L'Avenir," as he replied in a slow, drawling accent, which I knew to be enough of itself to annoy my friend:

"With all deference to M. le Marquis, who doubtless approves the action of his colleagues, I consider the policy which expends millions of francs on arms which may never be used, to be foolish and imprudent; and I hold that everyone who expresses approval of it must be either a traitor to the true interests of his country, or ignorant what these are."

"Monsieur," cried René, "I approve of the policy."

Enault shrugged his shoulders.

"You have already made that clear," he answered. "I can only say—so much the worse for you, and, perhaps also, so much the worse for the Government."

This slight on his literary capacity

touched René to the quick. He was intensely sensitive; intensely ambitious.

"You insult me!" he exclaimed.

"Do you take the truth as an insult?" returned the other, with a sneer.

The fact was that Enault was jealous of my friend, who was rapidly advancing to the first rank of journalism; and he was well content to quarrel with him on his own account, even if he had not obliged the Minister by doing so.

To Enault's last speech there could be but one sequel. A meeting was arranged and they fought. The editor of "L'Avenir" was one of the best shots in Paris. Doubtless the Marquis expected that Michonneau, now become an incumbrance to him, would fall; and, even if he were not killed, would be laid aside for a sufficiently long time to enable him to marry his daughter to the Vicomte de Boisjoly. The result, however, was very different. Enault missed; while René, nervous, excited, and unskilled in the use of the pistol though he was, sent a ball through his opponent's heart.

This accident, however, played M. de la Trémouille's game as well as any other; and I do not suppose that a man of his rank, the inheritor of mediæval ideas on the value of human life in creatures of a lower caste, cared much which mere journalist was killed to suit his convenience. For in any case Michonneau was got rid of. Duelling was to be severely punished in our model new Republic; and we had to make haste in smuggling the victor over the Belgian frontier, in order to save him from at least a long term of imprisonment.

He still worked for the journal, and I wrote to him regularly; but I carefully abstained from speaking of Mademoiselle de la Trémouille, hoping that the miserable affair in which he had just been concerned would in some degree have effaced this foolish passion from his mind. It appeared to have done so, for Michonneau made no enquiry after the Minister or any of his connections.

The duel had taken place in early winter. At the beginning of March it was evident that it had played its part in the schemes of the Marquis; the betrothal of Mademoiselle Charlotte to the Vicomte de Boisjoly was announced to the world. The wedding was to take place at Easter. Meanwhile the poor little Vicomte might be seen everywhere in attendance on his bride and her parents, of whom he seemed to be more or less afraid, though in other society of a more ignoble kind, he was confident

and presuming enough. Mademoiselle de la Trémouille looked prouder than ever, and more beautiful also; but the character of her beauty was changed. All the vivacity of girlhood was gone from it; one would have said even that the bloom of youth had disappeared from her complexion; she looked already like a mature woman of the world. And yet her pride covered only a bitterness that well-nigh approached humility, as I found on the occasion when I ventured to offer her my congratulations.

She listened in silence to my civil phrases, while her great dark eyes looked steadily into mine, as if to decipher how much truth lay beneath my words. How she read me I cannot say; but when I had finished my commonplace remarks, and was turning away, she stopped me, and with lips that trembled, forced herself to say a few words:

"Understand, M. Froidevaux—for I wish—you—to know the truth—that my father's honour is involved in my marriage. He has entrusted the preservation of it to me, and I must not prove unequal to the task."

I knew the message was meant for another than myself, and therefore dared to answer it frankly.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "I hold that a man has no claim to possess honour, who cannot keep it intact without aid from another, even his own child."

She flushed slightly, and I thought she sighed. "You are right, perhaps; but a child cannot say that to a parent, must not even think it of him."

I hesitated about forwarding this message to Michonneau, and finally decided to suppress it. But I could not suppress the newspapers, which conveyed to my friend all he needed to know—that Charlotte was about to be married. True, he had foreseen this marriage, had even prophesied his own dismissal; but it was none the less a shock, when his predictions were so speedily fulfilled. I did indeed hope that he had taken it calmly, for in his letters to me he made no mention of it; but I was soon to be undeceived.

I was in the Bois one day, watching the passers-by languidly, while I meditated an article for next week's issue of "Le Journal de Tout le Monde," when I saw approaching a riding-party of three persons—Mademoiselle de la Trémouille, accompanied by her father and her lover. They were going at a walking pace, so that I could observe them closely. The Marquis looked at

those around and occasionally bowed to an acquaintance with a delicious air of profound and yet benevolent self-satisfaction; his daughter, though she held her reins loosely and gazed absently in front of her, sat haughtily upright; while Boisjoly started nervously at every motion of his horse's head, and seemed painfully conscious of the insecurity of his position.

Suddenly, when they were about half a dozen yards from me, I saw Charlotte start and turn pale. She gave her horse a hasty cut with the whip, and in a moment had passed me like a flash of lightning, while her father hastened to overtake her, and Boisjoly, whose horse had broken sympathetically into a canter, joggled unsteadily behind. Turning to the point where the change in the girl's demeanour had taken place, I saw René Michonneau.

He was standing behind a group of people, and was half hidden also by a tree; but I could see his face, turned eagerly in the direction in which the woman he loved was disappearing, and as it I read an intense yearning, mingled with a sad reproach, and yet more painful triumph. I hurried up to him.

"René, what are you doing here!" I exclaimed. "It is madness to run such a risk!"

He took no notice of my question, though he seemed to feel some pleasure at meeting me, and kept my hand clasped in a convulsive pressure.

"Is it true?" he demanded.

"What are you speaking of?" I asked in return.

"Is it true that she is to marry this Boisjoly, this piece of gilded mud? Is he the idol to which Charlotte is to be sacrificed?"

"Say rather that he is the priest by whom the sacrifice is performed. The victim is offered up to her father's pride, poverty, and selfishness. But why do you take it so bitterly? You knew long ago that this must be; you yourself foretold it."

"Yes, but I did not, could not, foretell how intolerable it would be to me. And to her too! She seemed numbed with misery when she passed me; and when she caught a glimpse of my face, how pale she grew! It is a sin that she should be sacrificed! I will see her again. I will beseech her to come to me."

"Do not speak so loudly!" I entreated; "do not attract attention! If you are seen and recognised, you know what the

result must be. And do not try to see Mademoiselle de la Trémouille. She is resigned to her fate; she feels that duty demands of her this sacrifice of herself. You can offer her no better destiny than that which lies before her. Without her father's consent—unattainable, as you know—she cannot be your wife. Leave her then to such peace as she can find. Do not make her fate harder than it needs be."

"I must see her—I will see her," he repeated with set teeth. "But do not fear that I will compromise you by letting anyone see me in your society. Take no thought of me. I must go my own way at any risk. You shall not see me again till the object for which I have come to Paris is attained."

And before I had time to reply, he had left me, and was hidden by the shifting groups of loungers.

CHAPTER II.

I DID not see Michonneau, as I had expected to do, in any of the haunts we journalists affect, although there, among friends and fellow-workers, he would have been safe from the hands of the law. Indeed, he ran little risk if the Marquis de la Trémouille had not seen him when his daughter did; but there was no doubt that, if the Minister had recognised him, he would use any means, fair or foul, to keep him out of the way till Charlotte's marriage was accomplished.

I worried myself thinking of the complications my friend's presence might bring about at this juncture; and I could foresee nothing but trouble to himself, and possibly to the unfortunate girl as well. I think it was my discomposure that made me so ready to indulge just then in dissipations, which, as a rule, I detested. The insoluble conundrum of Michonneau's future troubled me so persistently, when I was not occupied with my work, that I was glad to take refuge from it in any place where I could find noise, light, and colour. I was thankful for the festival of Mi-Carême, which came just then to break the chastened gloom of a Parisian Lent, or, at least to give special excuse for some outburst of Bohemian jollity.

So, one night I went to a masked ball. I left the peace of the spring night, the silence in which, out in the half-built suburbs where I lived, one seemed almost to hear the trees bursting into bud and leaf

through their hard and gnarled branches, and to inhale, as in a dream of the country, the faint perfume of some brave violet that had not yet fled from the approach of man. I left these to listen to the harsh clanging of dance-music, and the still worse discordance of soulless, mirthless laughter; for the glare of gas, so yellow as to hide the lack of freshness in the gaudy, farcical costumes, and in the faces—not one of them bright or innocent-looking, though many of them were young—which smiled, and leered, and frowned, now beneath a silken mask, and again, hidden by only the almost equally complete protection of paint and powder and natural duplicity. I hated the scene—will you believe this of a Parisian journalist?—though I was present at it of my own free will.

Nevertheless it was, after its fashion, bright and gay enough. I let my imagination wander with my eyes, and taking scraps of overheard conversation for a groundwork, made a history for each bright-clothed figure that passed me.

Take, for example, that clown and the columbine who leant on his arm. I felt his figure to be dimly familiar. I fancied that could I see him in some other dress than the scarlet and white of a Pierrot, and undisguised by the white paint and vermilion triangles on his face, I should know him for an acquaintance; but in his masquerade costume I failed to recognise him. His companion was a pretty, though bold-looking girl, who wore no mask to hide a face that was apparently well known to many present.

The two paused for a minute in a whirling galop, and stopped to rest near the corner where I was standing.

"I suppose," said the girl, "that this will be your last dance at a Mi-Carême bal costumé, Monsieur. By this time next year you will be a staid husband, who will frown at the memory of these follies of past days."

"Not I, ma belle. It is not written in the marriage service that a man should be triste for the rest of his days. To marry is a duty to society, and one always takes such duties lightly. To be happy is a duty to oneself, and is therefore to be strictly performed. I shall not fail in it."

"Ah! the future Madame la Vicomtesse will have a voice in deciding wherein your happiness shall lie."

"Not much. Mademoiselle de la Trémouille seeks neither her own happiness nor mine in becoming my wife, and will,

therefore, make no effort to control my search for it after I am her husband."

The clue to the identity of the Pierrot, which I had hitherto failed to catch, was given me by this last remark. It was Boisjoly.

"So you say now," answered his companion, hastily; "but believe me, after she is married, a woman claims rights even while she refuses privileges. Your wife may do nothing to reconcile you to married life; but, nevertheless, she will object to your continuing the habits of your bachelor life, and you will have to submit to her wishes."

"You are wrong. I promise you that the event will prove it. I will wager a diamond brooch against the knot of ribbons on your shoulder that next year, at a Micarème ball, I shall be as ready as I am to-night to lead the cotillon with you. Will you take the wager?"

"Not unless the stakes are placed in my hands at once," returned the girl with a light laugh. "But do not let us stand still any longer. The music gets quicker as the end of the dance approaches. We have time for one more turn before it stops."

They whirled away from my sight, and I tried to put them from my memory also. In a moment I succeeded, for my eye fell on a figure dressed as a brigand—a Fra Diavolo with long cloak, peaked broad-brimmed hat, and a mask that did more than pretend to conceal the face below. But I knew the man too well not to recognise who it was that was lounging about the ball-room, keeping, in all his wanderings, his eyes steadily fixed on the entrance.

I went up to him hastily. "Réné," I exclaimed in a troubled whisper, "why are you here? Do you not know what a risk you run?"

"Froidevaux, is it you?" he answered, with some irritation in his tone. "I thought you were too grave to visit such a scene. But since I have met you I will ask your help, for, as you will believe, I do not wish to show myself more than is necessary. Keep near the door and watch for a tall lady in a blue domino. When she comes address her—she will know your voice, and she is aware that you are my friend—and bring her to me. I shall be in the alcove at the end of the salle."

"Do you mean that Mademoiselle——?"

"Hush! do not mention her name here. Yes, she has promised to meet me once

more; and we are safer from detection here than in the most deserted spot in Paris. There is no solitude like that of a crowd."

I doubted this last proposition, but I had no opportunity of disputing it, for Michonneau turned and left me, and I had no alternative but to repair to the post he assigned to me. I removed my mask, having no reason of my own to fear recognition, and so simplified the task of winning the confidence of Mademoiselle de la Trémouille when at last she appeared.

I felt her hand tremble as it lay on my arm, while I led her up the room. It was not strange that she should be afraid. It was long past midnight, and this ball was a place which women of her station are not supposed to visit. Her parents and her betrothed believed her to be asleep in her own chamber, while she was slinking out masked and disguised to meet a forbidden lover. Michonneau saw her agitation and was angered by it—anything angered him now, poor fellow!

"You seem distressed, Mademoiselle," he said, as he took her hand.

"Can you wonder?" she answered. "It is the height of folly in me to come here to meet you."

"Yet it is not the first—no, nor the tenth time, that you have left your father's house after nightfall to keep a rendezvous with me."

"No, but formerly it was different. I endangered no one but myself, and I even wished sometimes that I could be discovered, for then my father would have felt compelled to give me to you. But now! You know how I am placed, I am within a few weeks of my marriage—a marriage which is forced upon me, yet from which I dare not wish to escape. On its taking place my father's honour and credit depend. Any chance might bring the knowledge of what I have ventured to-night to the ears of M. de Boisjoly. Then what could I expect but that he would refuse to make me his wife, as holding me unfit to keep his name above scandal. And if he explained his reasons—Ah!"

She stopped abruptly, and barely suppressed a scream, for Boisjoly, passing by the alcove, had glanced at its occupants, and disentangling himself from the clinging grasp of his columbine, had come forward and laid his hand on the blue domino's arm.

"Mademoiselle de la Trémouille, do I

see you here—you?" he asked in a low but furious voice.

She trembled so that she could scarcely speak.

"You recognise me?" she faltered.

"Yes," he replied. "Your disguise is admirable, and sufficient for the world in general; but the man who meant to marry you in a fortnight is, as he ought to be, able to recognise you under any mask—even that of ingénue, which you have hitherto worn."

Michonneau interposed. "Whatever relation this lady may bear to you in future, remember that she is for the moment under my protection, and that whoever fails to address her with respect must answer for it to me."

"I have no doubt," said Boisjoly, "that I shall be better able to reply to your demands than you will be to answer mine."

"The means of settling all questions is easily obtained, nor need we waste much time in argument."

"Oh! what do you mean?" cried the frightened girl.

"Mademoiselle, this is not a place for you," said her betrothed, letting the question pass; "allow me to conduct you to your carriage."

Again Michonneau interposed with his now characteristic needless petulance.

"As Mademoiselle came here to meet me and not M. de Boisjoly, I claim the privilege of being her escort."

Charlotte gazed despairingly from one to the other. As the rivals had already quite sufficient cause of quarrel to satisfy belligerent souls, I thought I might venture to make some attempt at calming this petty difference, and offered my services for the trivial task.

Mademoiselle de la Trémouille accepted my offered arm, and turned from René without farewell. To Boisjoly, she said in a trembling voice: "My father and mother know nothing of this folly of mine. If it be possible, spare them."

The Vicomte bowed. "I trust to arrange this affair in such a manner as to incommodate neither you nor your family. In any case you may be sure that I know how to respect the honour of a noble name."

She must have known that any possible "arrangement" must involve danger to her lover, yet she walked away without even a glance at the man whom love for her had brought to such grievous peril. She had risked much for Michonneau, but she cared most for herself after all.

It is true, however, that she asked me in a whisper, as I placed her in one of the fiacres that were waiting outside, "Must they fight?"

"I fear it cannot be prevented."

"Try to do so," she implored. "Beseech them, for my sake, to part in peace."

I promised to comply with her request, though I knew it to be hopeless; and indeed when I returned to the ball-room neither René nor Boisjoly was to be seen. I looked around for them, but vainly, and though I asked the columbine, who had been Boisjoly's partner, if she knew where he had gone, she could give me no information.

M. le Pierrot had left her very abruptly, very rudely; she had no further interest in him. And she added, with a glance that was meant to be bewitching, "As both our companions seem to have deserted us, Monsieur, shall we not console each other?"

I turned away impatiently and left the place, troubled and irritated in mind. Nothing seemed left for me but to go home, for I knew not where to seek the rival lovers, and I wholly despaired of influencing either of them, even if I could find them.

I walked along, gloomily revolving the possible issue of Michonneau's mad love, until, as the night faded into grey, and the spring morning dawned chill and draped in mist, the special question in my mind seemed to lose its sharpness of outline, and blend vaguely with the cloud of sorrow and wrong, which I felt to be overhanging the great sleeping city. I lived, as I have said, in one of the unfinished suburbs—a poor one, which would never be occupied by any but workmen, tradesmen of the poorer class, and an occasional struggling writer like myself. The blocks of houses, experiments of speculative builders, loomed gaunt and spectral through the mist; they might have been the ruins of past ages instead of the barely finished erections of yesterday, as they waited till a connecting row of buildings should link them together. Between them lay fields—desolate fields, which the city had invaded and taken possession of, as being convenient spots in which to cast refuse, or store the bricks and stones of future walls; but where newly mated birds still clung to the homes they had built in their hereditary trees, and familiar flowers made brave efforts to bloom, in spite of the surrounding smoke and grime. These fields always

struck me with a peculiar feeling of depression; they were gloomier to me than the loneliest country lane. A brooding sadness seemed to overhang them, as if they were haunted by the prophetic ghosts of the inmates of the dwellings that were to arise upon them. The very cry of a bird, too early disturbed in its nest, seemed to my fretful ear to have a human sound.

Was it not a human cry? I heard it again, this time it seemed to articulate. "Help me, for Heaven's sake," I thought it said; and at the same moment I saw as I strained my eyes to pierce the morning mist, a figure running towards me, doubtless in search of help for some injured comrade. Yet surely it was the strangest being that ever sought aid for one in danger or pain! It was a man draped in a long cloak, which, however, floating behind him as he ran, displayed the piebald scarlet and white of his face and garments. It was the Pierrot of the masked ball—the Vicomte de Boisjoly.

"Vicomte!" I exclaimed as he approached me, and tried to catch him as he passed; but he eluded my hand and fled with a swiftness that defied pursuit.

Then I burst through the scant and tattered hedge, and hurrying onwards found what I knew must be lying somewhere, the body of my poor friend, René Michonneau. He still lived, but the blood was pouring from a bullet wound in his lungs, and the death-dew was gathering on his brow. One hand, from which the useless pistol had dropped, was clutching in agony at the stunted grass; I took the other in mine, and strove to raise him and to stanch the wound.

He seemed to recognise me and to feel no surprise at my appearing at that moment.

"Too late, Georges, too late," he gasped. Then recurring to the event of the previous hour—"She will get home safely?" he enquired.

"Doubtless," I answered briefly, feeling at that moment a most bitter indifference to the fate of Charlotte de la Trémouille.

"I have died for her," he went on—was it madness on my part to think I heard a certain triumph in his feeble voice? "It is worth doing, this—to die for love of a woman; and yet—yet—I doubt if she was worth it. Who knows? Women are weak and selfish, even the best of them; and she will be happier in the future if she has not loved me too well."

His voice died away, as the life-blood ebbed from him. In the last few moments his mind wandered, whether to past or future, who shall say! For his last words, before he fell back still and lifeless, were, "Embrasse moi, ma mère," accompanied by an outstretching of the arms, as if he, indeed, sought to clasp in them his long-dead mother.

In due course I laid an information against the Vicomte de Boisjoly. It was laughed at. The Vicomte swore that he had gone to bed before midnight, on the evening I spoke of, had never stirred till his valet brought him his coffee at eight o'clock next morning, and had not been at a masked ball since Carnival time. The valet confirmed his master's statement, and I could not call Mademoiselle de la Trémouille to witness to the truth of mine. I knew that, had the choice lain with René, he would rather a thousand times that his death should remain unavenged, than that a shade of scandal should fall on her.

I submitted to circumstances; and, uninterrupted, save by such pang of memory and conscience as may venture to attack personages of the "grand monde," a gay wedding took place at the Madeleine, and flowers were scattered, and opera-singers sang, and an Archbishop made Alfred de Boisjoly and Charlotte de la Trémouille man and wife. And if the bride looked deadly pale beneath her wreath of flowers, and the bridegroom strove, vainly, to hide sullenness with smiles, the satisfaction that beamed on the countenance of the Marquis Alain de la Trémouille was perfect and sincere.

Do you wish to hear more? The Vicomtesse de Boisjoly, after six months of the most reckless gaiety, extravagant and eccentric even for Paris, suddenly retired to the country, where she has remained ever since. Rumour says that she has gone mad. Meanwhile, the Vicomte spends most of his time at Monte Carlo, and is doing his best to kill himself with absinthe.

Michonneau is not wholly unavenged.

A LITTLE GREY CAT.

By PAUL CHALLINOR.

"THIS is yours, miss, I think," said a civil man in the corner, tossing it into Fanny's lap.

He had rescued "it" from being swept out of the omnibus, under the dingy skirts of the shabby old woman with a bundle, who got out at the last stoppage. The little red muff had been tossing about underfoot, on the dusty boards of the Islington omnibus, had been trodden on, had been kicked from corner to corner unperceived. No wonder Fanny shrank back, too disgusted to say "Thank you." The civil man retreated immediately behind his newspaper, with evidently no desire for further conversation.

Then she picked it up gingerly, and looked at it. A dainty little article—crimson plush, satin-lined, wadded, quilted, scented, with a cataract of pendent loops of ribbon at one side, and perched on the top, by way of decoration, the dearest, softest, tiniest mite of a grey French kitten, exquisitely mounted; the pose life-like, with one delicate paw advanced, claws distended, in a clutch at the ribbons, the tail erect and bushy. The little, bright-eyed face looked out from its soft ruff with irresistible kittenish *espieglerie*. It was the work of an artist. Fanny beat the dust from it tenderly, caressed it admiringly, smoothed the plush, straightened the ribbons with a feminine and professional instinct, and began to cast about for the owner.

Not the civil man in the corner, of course; nor yet the old charwoman with the bundle. Who else had been in the omnibus? It had been empty when she entered, with two boys scrambling in after her. They were not likely to be the possessors. They had straps of books, and fishing-rods, and a sloppy and muddy tin can, possibly containing bait. Then in had come a hot, anxious woman with a baby, a two-year-old child, a three-year-old child, and twin little lads of four or five. She had brought in a bird-cage, a basket, and a parcel done up in a bursting newspaper, but no muff, Fanny was convinced. Nor had the lady in deep crape who succeeded her; nor yet the two stout foreigners, who had stared her out of countenance. That was the sum-total of her fellow-passengers. She must hand the muff to the conductor; and, with this praiseworthy intent, she moved to the door and ineffectually signed to him.

As she did so the 'bus stopped, and some school-girls, out a-holiday-making, got in, and the 'bus was off again before Fanny could make her tale heard. There were many glances of admiration cast in

the direction of Fanny's lap, where the little grey cat reposed so becomingly. She felt them in her inmost soul; and with every glance her intent of restitution wavered. The red plush just matched her old winter frock and jacket, giving them exactly the touch of style which she had felt she needed. No wonder the man in the corner was sure she was the owner. The grey puss harmonised with her poor little cheap fur ruff, which she knew was shabby, but had not dared to replace in the present state of her finances; for she was a good little woman, and the big satchel beside her was stuffed full of small presents for all the people at home.

There was a silk muffler for father, and a beautiful knitted petticoat for mother, bought cheap at the spring sales, but good for next winter; a smart photograph frame for sister Lizzie, and a book for Tommy; a fashionable beer-jug for Polly the married sister, and a string of Cyprus beads for the baby. Also, at the bottom was something else, most special of all. A small parcel addressed to nobody in particular, only inscribed in Fanny's very best handwriting with the distich—

When this you see,
Remember me.

and tied up with a bit of blue ribbon. Inside was the most beautiful embroidered tobacco-pouch, made, every stitch of it, by Fanny's own tired little fingers in her spare moments. A magnificent production, all silk and tinsel, with "A E I" in gold, surrounded by a wreath of forget-me-nots. She hadn't the faintest notion of what the letters stood for, but the flowers were plain enough for, well—Anybody—to understand; supposing that—Anybody—had cared to remember her for so long as twelve months, and supposing that—Anybody—had got over a foolish prejudice against her going to London to business.

Then she clean forgot the muff for full five minutes in a vision of home and father, and a certain spot near the mill-tail, where the real forget-me-nots grew near the cleft in the bank. The tumble-down old bridge crossed the mill-stream just above it, leading to the field-path to Dowse's smithy. Was "D. D.," for "Dan Dowse," still to be seen on the top rail she wondered? And the "F.," for "Fanny," which she had cut herself? She would have cut another "F.," for "Flowerdale," too, but Dan had said, "where's the use?" and had made her leave it as it was—an "F" and a "D," and a big "D" and a circle round

all three, and asked her how she thought that looked. It looked so dreadfully particular, she thought, that she could not answer; but just tossed her head and ran back to the mill.

Well, she dared say it was all rubbed away by this time, and nobody cared. She did wish she had not made so much of the delights of London in her letters home. It must have looked as if she regretted nothing, and nobody, that she had left behind. If he had only spoken out; or if she had had any thing to go upon! Perhaps this holiday might set all to rights again. She had screwed and scraped to afford it out of her scanty little salary. She was only a milliner's assistant from Islington High Street—a shabby thing in heroines, one must admit with regret.

The sun shone out good-naturedly to brighten up the little girl's holiday. The old mill standing in the garden of bright spring flowers splashed out a noisy welcome. Father, rubicund and round, in his white cap and powdered whiskers, was waiting at the gate to greet her. Above the pink and white blossom of the orchard peeped a well-known corner of mossy red-tiled gable and chimney-stack—the chimneys of the forge—smokeless, as she saw in an instant's brief glance, even as she flung her arms round poor, sickly mother's neck, and heard her exclaim at her thinness and paleness. She dared ask no questions then. Lizzie was "Oh, mying!" at her smart clothes, and telling all about Polly's baby's christening; and Tommy was whooping round her, trying to drag her off there and then to inspect a water-rat's nest, and try the new pitchfork which Dan Dowse had given him for a keepsake.

"Ah, poor Dowse!" said the worthy miller, with the certain air of melancholy complacency which so often accompanies the telling of bad news. "Poor old Dowse! We shall miss him here, I'm thinking. You're just in time for the funeral, Fan."

"Funeral!"

The little red muff dropped unheeded to Fanny's feet, and she stared at him blankly.

"Old Mrs. Dowse. She's gone at last, sure enough. A happy release; there's no denying it. Drove Tom to New Zealand with her nagging tongue. The doctors say she must have been an awful sufferer, though. Dan never crossed her in anything, nor let her want for anything that

money could buy to the last. Now Tom's doing first-rate out there, and has written for Dan to join him."

"But Dan won't go, will he, father!"

"Why not, lass? He's got no one to please but himself now. There'll be a handsome funeral. You're just in time." And the miller departed to his work; while Fanny was taken out to see the chickens and the new cart and horse, and then on to Polly's new house to tea.

The road led past the forge, across the wide, black cinder mark in the white road that she knew so well. The forge fires were out, and the great doors closed and barred. In the pretty, ill-kept, old red house the blinds were drawn down, and Fanny thought with a pang of all the hard things she had tried not to say or think about the poor, vexatious, shiftless old slattern lying dead behind the white curtains. Then there flashed before her—to be driven away at once—the vision of the different home she could make there for Dan—if Dan would ever ask her.

Then they came to Polly's; and Polly had got the house and baby in readiness to receive them, with hot scones and honey-cakes, apple-pasties, and gingerbread in tea. Baby, thriving, red, and kicking, was almost bursting out of the fine christening frock Mrs. Swete at the Hall had given him. Mrs. Swete had further deigned to send an invitation, as distinct and imperative as a Royal command to Court, to Fanny and Lizzie to come up to the hall to supper with her that evening.

No one thought of refusing. Mrs. Swete was a great person in the village. She had been housekeeper to Sir Edmund, and to his father before him—the undisputed mistress of the place till such time as the young Baronet should take unto himself a bride. Moreover, she was a cousin of the miller's, with money at her disposal; and Fanny's godmother. She had always claimed a certain measure of authority over the girl, and had, in fact, been the chief instigator of her move to town. Fanny submitted amiably to a severe cross-examination about her life there, her work, and her acquaintances, which apparently satisfied Mrs. Swete, for she nodded approval once or twice. Then she dismissed Lizzie to "look round the conservatories before it got too dark," and settling herself in her big chair by the window, prepared to be confidential.

"So you've never seen my young master there, never? Well, that's odd, con-

sidering how often he goes up to London. Perhaps Islington may be a little out of his way though."

"How is Master Edmund—Sir Edmund, I mean?"

"Ah, child," with an ominous shake of the head. "You may well ask 'How's Sir Edmund?' I only wish I could tell you. Oh, that Switzerland! Never with my good will will I see a gentleman of family go wasting his time in foreign parts again!"

"It was natural that he should want a little bit of pleasuring once his father had gone, wasn't it?" suggested Fanny shyly. "He hadn't much in his lifetime."

"It wouldn't become me to pass observations on my late master, Fanny; but I never did hold with his bringing up of the young gentlemen. All the sweet to one, and all the sour to the other—and him the heir. Well, well! he's in his grave, and poor Master Rex too, and Sir Edmund mayn't be long a-following them."

"Mercy! What's the matter?" asked Fanny dismayed. She and Sir Edmund had been playfellows once upon a time, in the lonely days of his motherless, neglected boyhood, and the kindly feeling had lasted on ever since—which perhaps accounted for Mrs. Swete's desire to see Fanny established at a safe distance.

"Matter? He's bewitched, I think. All through the shooting season he hardly touched a gun. Jakes—the new keeper—said it made him sick, it did, to see them poor partridges running about with nobody doing their duty by them. Then, when the hunting began, one day he'd ride like a madman, and the next come sauntering home without seeing a run. Then he was backward and forward to London—all for nothing that anybody can tell," and a flash of latent suspicion rekindled in Mrs. Swete's eyes. "That's a handsome muff you have got there. How did you come by it?" she asked sharply, and somewhat inconsequently.

Fanny told her story.

"Ah, I daresay it isn't as expensive as it looks. Perhaps you'd better watch for the advertisement though. Send up Tommy to-morrow, and I'll look you out the 'Times' for last week. It suits your frock nicely too. I may as well give you my grey ostrich feather. It will look better in your hat than that shabby wing and bow; and it matches the cat's fur too. You mayn't have to give her back after all."

Mrs. Swete, whose sense of duty to the family kept her aloof from village gossips, brightened up mightily after this unburdening of her mind, and was supremely gracious for the rest of the evening.

"Why, where can you have been, Fanny?" asked the miller on her return home. "Here's Dan Dowse been waiting and waiting till I had to send him off to Polly's to find you. Didn't you see him? Perhaps he thought it wasn't decent, though, with his mother not in her grave yet, to go running round after the lasses."

Fanny's pillow that night was wet with tears that were not at all for Sir Edmund's troubles.

A fine, bright, summer-like country Sunday. Fanny couldn't deny herself the pleasure of wearing the little grey cat, for the last time perhaps. She had pinned Mrs. Swete's noble grey plume round her scanty red velvet hat, and the red muff just covered the worn front of her jacket. She had drawn on a long pair of grey Suede gloves—old "shop-keepers," stained with mildew, and bought for a song—her hair was turned up high in a fashion yet unknown in these primitive regions; her skirts had the latest set; and a very grand and stylish young lady indeed she looked, as she walked up the rough, flagged aisle to the green-lined box, belonging by hereditary right to the owners of the mill, and cast a glance, just one, towards the benches in front of the organ, where Dan Dowse used to sit and lead the basses.

As soon as she did so, she felt hot with confusion. She had not thought of old Mrs. Dowse's funeral that was to take place that day, till she saw Dan and all the funeral party assembled in the deepest of black. Most of the neighbours, too, had assumed some little token of mourning in respect to the family, and her smart clothes seemed doubly out of keeping, and as if worn to flout the universal sentiment. She blushed to the brim of her hat with vexation, and kept her eyes averted from Dan, looking straight before her into the Squire's pew, where Sir Edmund, a tall, broad-shouldered, somewhat heavy-featured young fellow, sat in moody meditation, his shoulders up to his ears, dragging at his black moustache, and frowning to himself in almost ostentatious inattention to the service.

It was over at last; and as they issued from the old grey porch the funeral bell

began to toll just over their heads, and Fanny shivered and wanted to run home to cry, but that was impossible. Friends came up to greet her, and she had to bear with criticisms on herself, inquiries after her London lover—a local joke that would stand a good deal of wear—and remarks on Dan Dowse's bearing and prospects, and the news that Eben Prawley had made him a handsome offer for the forge and house, as he wished to set up his son there on his marriage.

The funeral party was mustering and marshalling. The neighbours, in their decent black, gathered for the service. Fanny could not stay. She felt as if every eye was turned on her flaring smartness, and, to Lizzie's surprise, slipped quietly away over the stile, and off across the fields as fast as her feet could carry her to the mill.

At the gate was Tommy, hot and breathless.

"Is the burying all done?" he asked, with a rueful visage. "And I did want to see the coffin go in; but Mrs. Swete she have kep' me so long a-finding this for you——"

"You'll be in time, Tommy."

Tommy withdrew his knuckles from his eye, stuffed a "Times" advertisement-sheet into her hand, and was off as fast as his small legs could carry him.

She carried the paper mechanically up to her room, where the first thing that met her was her own pretty reflection in Lizzie's glass. She dared not cry, but in a sort of dumb fury that was a substitute for tears, dragged off her long gloves, tossed her smart hat away, and, taking up the little red muff, looked at it with vindictive eyes as at a talisman that had worked her evil. She gave the poor little puss a hard fling to the other end of the room, and then set to work to untwist and tear down her pretty fashionable coils of hair, pulling and tangling with reckless cruelty till she got it all shaken loose over her shoulders, and then proceeded to screw it up severely into penitential flatness and sleekness, damping out every ripple of crimp or spray of curl, and making, as Lizzie observed half-an-hour later, "as much of a sight as she could of herself."

After the dinner—doubly good and plentiful in her honour—she helped her mother to clear away as in old times; and, as in the old times, there came presently the click of the iron garden-gate and a heavy tread crunching the loose gravel of the path

round the house to the back, and Fanny's heart gave one wild leap of hopefulness. But it was only her brother-in-law, followed by Polly carrying the baby.

Little did he think, honest man, how near to hating him Fanny came when he took his seat in a certain wooden brass-bound arm-chair, opposite to the miller, on the hearth, and filled his pipe from the jar of tobacco on the corner of the mantel-shelf, looking so like and so unlike another figure that used to occupy that place. Polly and her mother fell into a discussion on the short-coating of baby. Lizzie and Tommy went to the Sunday school, and Fanny was at last left to herself.

She had an errand that she felt she must do, and at once.

Up to her room she sped and took from her bag the little parcel that had never found its owner. At the sight of the wreathed letters and the gay blue flowers, the tears gathered softly in her eyes.

"At least no one else shall have it. I'll drop it in the mill-stream," she had been thinking all day; but now her heart almost misgave her.

She shrouded herself in an old black shawl. Beside it lay the red muff, with the little playful cat peering at her with bright, twinkling eyes.

"And you shall go after it," she cried in a spasm of unreasoning rage.

The ground rose high on one side the mill-stream, and in the rough, stony bank was one cleft well known to her and one other. Up above it the gorse—which only goes out of season when kinsing goes out of fashion—made a fence against intruders. Below, it could only be gained by stepping from stone to stone in the bed of the stream. The water was still; the great moss-grown wheel above creaked idly in its Sunday rest. Only two green meadows off were the smokeless chimneys of the forge; so near, and yet so far from her now! She had to cross the old bridge before the descent of the stream could be made. Its crazy rail was green with moss and rudely patched with fresh wood, yet the one place she knew of was intact; she could have found it with her eyes shut; three big iron nail-heads fastening the rail to its post, and just under them had been the initials! No trace of them remained. Not smoothed away by wear; not effaced by newer cuttings; but gone. The very piece had been cleanly cut out. It was no new cut either, for the

wood had darkened to the same colour as the rest, and the edges had become worn smooth.

It needed but this! Down the bank she scrambled blindly, and, springing from stone to stone in the water, reached her covert at last, and sitting down on a big boulder, let the sobs come as they would, crying as if her tears might fill the mill-stream or melt the very stones to pity. She dried her eyes at last and began to look about her.

The forget-me-nots floated on the still water at her feet. She drew forth her poor little keepsake and stooped forward to lay it with them; but drew back suddenly.

Someone was leaning over the rail of the bridge whistling fragments of a doleful melody. The willows that drooped from the bank formed a scanty veil of fresh green between her and him; but yet she feared to be seen. She would wait till he passed on. Mrs. Swete's newspaper was still in her pocket, so she drew it out, and affected to become absorbed in its perusal. A big pencil cross directed her attention at once to an advertisement.

"Stolen from a carriage in Regent Street, on the afternoon of Wednesday, the fifteenth, a red plush muff, with a little grey kitten on it. Also, a purse, containing a small sum in silver, a handkerchief with embroidered initials 'I. V. P.,' a case with a valuable gold bangle, and a parcel containing two lengths of old point lace. Any person giving information that shall lead to the recovery of these articles shall receive a reward of twenty pounds. Apply to Messrs. Brown and Jones, solicitors, Lincoln's Inn."

In a separate line below—

"N.B.—The above reward will be paid if the muff alone be restored."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Fanny, startled out of her sorrows for the moment. "Twenty pounds to be had for the asking!"

A smell of tobacco-smoke had been drifting down to her from the bridge, and now the end of a cigarette fell hissing into the water. Then came the sound of a foot-step gingerly stepping over the stones. Her retreat was discovered, and she sprang up in dismay.

"Don't stir, Fanny." It was Sir Edmund who spoke. "I've not had a chance of a word with you yet. I waited discreetly to ~~make~~ sure that you were really alone in

your bower. How are you? How do you like London, and how are you getting on?"

Sir Edmund's voice had the old familiar tone, and he smiled pleasantly on his former playmate.

"Quite well, thank you. How are you, sir?" Fanny asked, with a friendly little smile.

"Nothing very bright. I've half a mind to go out to New Zealand with our friend at the smithy. What have you been doing to him, Fanny, you witch? I expected to have heard the banns published months ago."

She flashed an offended look at him, and he checked himself.

"I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to vex you. One gets into the way of such jokes. They're bad form, I know; but I'm an ill-bred country lout, as I always was. How should I be anything else?" he went on in a sort of rage at himself. "You know what my father was, and how he treated me?"

Fanny nodded. The evil reputation of Sir Hugh had become a village proverb.

"You know how he grudged me the bringing up of a gentleman. He was glad to see me growing up rough and rude like one of his own farm labourers. He hated me for my mother's sake. He hated me for my own. He hated me because I lived, and he hated me worse because my poor brother Rex died. What chance have I had?" he went on savagely. "How am I to be anything but a boor, an ill-mannered, uncouth ruffian, that no lady can look at except with scorn?"

"Nay, now, sir. I'm sure we all thought a deal of you."

"Oh, the folks here? Yes. Because I know a horse when I see one, and am a decent shot. Yes, I'm the sort of squire to suit them. But for the rest—for all that belongs to the real work of a country gentleman, what training had I?"

"Why, sir, you used to read a lot, and teach yourself things."

He nodded gloomily.

"I was vain enough once upon a time to fancy that brains and hard work might make something of a man in the long run; but I've seen the folly of the notion. I've been up to town as well as you, Fan, since we last met."

"One learns a deal there, sir."

"Yes, you've found out how to make a fine lady of yourself, little Fan," he went on, looking at her with dreary approval.

"You've lost the village twang, and you carry yourself in your smart gown like a little duchess, and look down on your lowly admirers."

"Oh don't, sir, don't!" she pleaded, half-crying.

"Do you think I could learn as much in as short a time? No, I know better. I'm in my proper place down here. I can do my duty by the land and the people. Perhaps if they sent me up to Parliament one of these days, I could do some better work there than some of those I listened to. Bah! What's the good?" he broke off impatiently. "I shall still be a rough, uncultured yokel. There's a whole textbook of social graces and proprieties to be learnt before I'm fit for Society, and who's to teach me?"

"Your wife," said Fan, with the frankness of old days. "You marry a lady who's been brought up to it all herself, and you'll soon learn of her."

"A great lady? Like—someone I met once. Yes, I think Mrs. Pierpoint could do it," he said half to himself.

"The beautiful Mrs. Pierpoint? I've heard of her. I saw her portrait in the Academy, and all her gowns are in the 'Queen.'"

He burst into a harsh laugh. "Is she the sort of woman you think would devote herself to improving my mind and manners? Can't you fancy her coming down here to settle for life at the Hall, playing Joan to my Darby? I can tell you something absurd, Fanny. I once actually thought she meant to do it! Why don't you laugh? You are the only person who has heard the joke."

But Fanny's eyes only grew soft with pity.

"It was my ignorance, you see. How should I know Mrs. Vernon Pierpoint from any other pleasant friendly woman traveling with an invalid father, who took a sick man's fancy for my company. I was glad enough to keep with them as long as I decently could. She gave me a word and a smile when we parted, Fanny, on which I have lived all these winter months."

"Have you never met her again, sir?" Fanny asked, in a voice tremulous with sympathy.

"Seen her again? Oh yes, over and over again. Across a gaping crowd of admirers, no nearer. My beautiful lady with the clear, earnest eyes and sweet simple nature is a London beauty, as you say, Fanny. I was fool enough to worry for an invitation

to a big entertainment—the first I had ever been to in my life, and the last. There she was surrounded by great folks, and a Prince for a partner forsooth! and I outside the circle watching for a stray fragment of her notice—in vain. I came away. I had learned my place, Fanny."

"Oh, for shame, Sir Edmund! When it was your place to make your way to her in spite of everything, to let your pride hold you back! Think of her—waiting may be with an aching heart for you."

"I tell you I am nothing to her, nor she to me, henceforth I've learnt my lesson. We don't die for disappointed love now-a-days, Fan."

"Don't we, sir?" and the gathering tear in her eyes suddenly splashed down, and her hand closed on the little tobacco-pouch.

"We whistle the false ones away—so—and look out for someone who suits us better. I'm a country clod. I must mate in my own sphere, Fan."

A sudden, freakish, desperate light sparkled in his dark eyes.

"Why won't you take me? You'd make a capital lady, and you'll find me a good husband. Would you try?"

He spoke in bitter jest, but with enough serious purpose in it to send a dazzling temptation flashing before the girl's eyes; so vivid, so dazzling, that she shut them tight and clasped the little pouch as a talisman.

"Now you are joking ill-manneredly, Sir Edmund," she cried. "Please stop at once, or I must go away! If I could think you in earnest, all I should have to say to you would be that I'd shame to be a man and so poor a thing as you! To give up one's love for a bit of a cross! When it's the man's part to work, strive, and fight to get your will. I'm only a girl who must do no more than grieve and give up, but I'm truer and braver than you, for I'll hold to my love whatever may have come between us. His fancy may have changed, but mine shall hold to the end." She spoke out bravely, her cheeks hot and her eyes shining. Sir Edmund looked at her admiringly.

"Then you'd never have anything to say to me?"

"Never. Or if I had—if I had let myself be so ill-guided, and we were at the church door, nay, if the ring were on my finger, and I heard the voice of Dan Dowse calling me, I'd turn from you and follow him to the world's end!"

There came a mighty crash through the

orse above them. The brushwood parted, and a black figure came sliding, rolling, rambling down the bank till it landed between them, while a tall hat, veiled in ighty crape weepers, hopping down after, ached the bottom nearly as soon.

"Dan!" shrieked Fanny.

Dan was on his feet in a minute, with his arm around her waist.

"Hurra!" he shouted. "Hurra! my girl!—my Queen!—my Heart of Gold! And to think that I have been mistrusting, and moping, and hanging about, without daring to speak, thinking you'd got beyond me—thinking all manner of shabby things! I wish my neck had been wrung first! Yes, I've been listening. I'm a jealous, suspicious blockhead, you know; and I wouldn't have missed what I've heard for a thousand pounds!"

"Then I'm glad you have heard it," said Sir Edmund, with dignity. "You have been listening to my secrets, you are aware. I must beg you to respect them. I think I'd perhaps better go now," he ended, with a kindly smile. Dan held out his hand with a look that meant much.

"Good-bye, and thank you, sir," faltered Fanny, her face one scarlet blush.

"There's a word I'd like to say," put in Dan awkwardly enough. "Maybe—no offence, sir—you'd just cast over in your mind the mistake I've been a-making here. I see this young lady come back from London, where she's been meeting many a finer fellow than me—yourself amongst them, maybe, sir. I take everything she does amiss. I keep away from her. I settle in my mind that it's all up with me, and nothing left on this side of the world for me. The one thing I cared for would have gone with me, Fanny, my dear." He drew from his vest a little slip of wood, with three letters cut in it. "That's stayed by me ever since your pretty fingers touched it, and that would have gone to my grave with me."

"Oh, Dan!" And Fanny, oblivious of the spectator, fairly threw her arms round her blacksmith's neck and burst into tears.

The little rocky retreat had been overcrowded by one since Dan's uncere-monious entrance. Sir Edward would willingly have escaped, but the others barred his way. He turned discreetly away from them and pretended to kindle a fusee.

"Hulloa!" he cried, "what's this?"

He was holding up, with a face of excite-

ment, the little grey muff, that once again had fallen neglected and trodden under-foot.

"I've seen this before! I was in Brussels when it was bought. I'd swear to it any day!"

Fanny, recalled to a sense of the proprieties, hastily picked up the "Times" and searched for the advertisement. Sir Edmund snatched it from her and read with devouring eyes. "Hers!" he said under his breath, and reverently stroked the little creature's silky fur. "Her initials—Ida Vernon Pierpoint."

"But all the rest—the valuable things—are gone," said Fanny sadly. "It's odd, too, that she should set as much store by this as by all of them put together. It's a pretty cat; but it's a last season's fashion," and she turned the little animal about perplexedly.

Sir Edmund, looking puzzled likewise, stretched out his hand for the muff, then, with an awakened air, began searching under the paw of the little creature. At last he found the tiny spring of which he was in search, and a little secret pocket or purse disclosed itself. It held but one thing, a small russet-leather case, with the monogram "I.V.P." repeated in gold. Inside that was folded paper.

"Bank notes," said Dan.

"Love letters," cried Fanny.

Neither. Only a dry bit of white fluffy flower pinned on a gentleman's visiting card, across which a few pencilled words and a date. That was all Fanny could see, for Sir Edmund hastily closed it as one guarding an enshrined relic from infidel eyes. "The Edelweiss!" he murmured softly, his deep, dark eyes glowing, his handsome face radiant. His colour came and went like a girl's. There was evidently some deep significance in the sight for him alone.

"The Edelweiss! And she kept it for my sake!"

Fanny took the muff and stroked the little grey cat thoughtfully, considering the situation. Dan, beaming and uncomprehending, awaited her pleasure.

"Twenty pounds means a good deal to Dan and me. I don't think I can give up the muff to you, sir. But that case—it must be something very valuable in the lady's eyes. Perhaps, as the lawyers know nothing about it, for fear of accidents you had better take it back to her, Sir Edmund. I shouldn't wonder if she'd like best to settle with you

herself what the reward for bringing it back shall be."

"There's the five-forty up-train——" began Dan.

But Sir Edmund had gone.

THE KNELL OF KNOCKMAGH.

By FREDERICK TALBOT.

THE winter had been wild and rough, and nowhere wilder or rougher than on the west coast of Ireland, in a country which suited that kind of weather exactly. Where there was land it was brown and bare, and seemed to grow nothing but stones, although cleared with infinite labour, and the stones built into rough walls that made an intricate network of every hill-side. Where there was water, that was brown, too, and cheerless, rushing between rugged banks, or tossed in the wind-swept loughs that were thickly set everywhere among the bleak, bare moorlands. There were mountains, too, rugged and brown, rising in many tumbled peaks and summits; but these were rarely seen in the short winter days. The grey mists and wild, hurrying clouds seemed to form a kind of ceiling to the country, not far above people's heads, leaving nothing to be seen but the shoulder of a low hill perhaps, a black tarn edged with foam, or a river-side fringed with straggling bushes half-drowned in the swollen water.

But spring brought a wonderful change to this stubborn land of rock and flood. When the winter gales had blown themselves to a standstill, and the clouds had emptied their water-pots, when the sun stole out from among the massy walls of vapour, all the gloom of the land was changed to a misty kind of glamour. The solitary loughs shone like molten gold among the brown hills, now charged with a thousand subtle tints; even the stone walls were transformed, crested over with lichens and feathered with the fresh, green fronds of innumerable ferns. The rugged mountain peaks assumed a soft aerial charm, and the light sea-breeze was almost intoxicating in its purity and freedom.

Nor was the country any longer solitary. The fishing had been open for some weeks, but the storms and floods had so far put their veto upon it. Now, as the waters cleared, and the rivers retired into their proper beds, the whole angling world was alive and hastening to the scene. Boats

studded the surface of the lough, and fisher men began to haunt their favourite pools. Not so many years ago, any brother of the gentle craft might whip the waters from river to lough with a welcome wherever he went. Times have changed; the old gentility of the land, so easy, hospitable, and prudent, have almost passed away, and in their place rules a great London Company which looks to profit chiefly, and turns its proprietary rights into hard cash. But there was a reach of water about two miles on either side of Knockmagh Castle—four miles, that is, of the best part of the river—that unites the two chief lakes of the district, which anyone might fish, on paying the compliment of asking Colonel O'Byrne's leave.

A sweet old home was Knockmagh Castle, facing the sunshine and the broad, flashing river. Two ancient gables, with broad, mullioned windows, looked out from a mass of ivy and creepers that clung to the grey old walls. Over the roofs and gables rose an old, square tower, covered with verdure to its very summit. Centuries of care and pains had turned the barren glen into a lovely pleasure-land. All was now wild and overgrown, but still charming. The terrace in front of the Castle was bounded by an old-fashioned balustrade of stone, and broad steps led down to the river, where a couple of boats were moored, that swayed gently to and fro in the swirl and eddy of the current.

"Sure, the ould place wants for nothing, but to be let alone," said Thady, the old servant of the Castle, as he descended the steps with an armful of rods and fishing-tackle, which he carefully placed in the smaller of the boats. "Only to be let alone," repeated Thady, "and yet that's what those raskilly lawyers will never do."

"Thady," said a clear, musical voice from the terrace, "my father can't come out to-day. The fever has caught him again, and he can't stir. But he bids me go out, Thady; for a day like this must not be missed. We will drop down to the Abbey pool, and fish up the stream from there."

Thady looked up at the speaker, a young woman of eighteen or so, with the dark bronze hair and blue eyes of the true West-Country type—looked up at her slim figure in its light-fitting, homespun dress, with something like contempt.

"And do you think, Miss Kate, ye can handle the Cornel's eighteen-foot rod and one of them fifteen-pound fish that is laying

the pool down there? Why, he'd ate ou, Miss Kate."

"Ah, now, Thady," cried Miss O'Bryan, humbly. "I can only do my best, you know; and I shall have your teaching, Thady, and your experience to guide me."

The old fellow was mollified by his young mistress's tribute to his talents, and, bringing the boat up to the steps, he steadied it while Kate O'Bryan took her seat, and then, taking an oar, he placed himself in the stern and sculled the craft down the river, guiding her down the rapids, and among the shoals and islets, with a ready and practised hand. Below the Castle the river took a wide sweep round a peninsula of low-lying meadow land that formed the demesne of the barony; and at the other extremity of the horse-shoe curve thus formed were the ruins of the ancient Abbey of St. Mary, where the fishing rights of Knockmagh ended. Below that point all belonged to the great Company. High over the meadows rose the tall, slender tower of the Abbey, which to anyone passing along the river seemed to change its position constantly in a very bewildering fashion. From the Castle you seemed to be leaving it behind: it faded away into the far distance, and then suddenly came into view close at hand, its tall pinnacles reflected in a placid reach of the river. Again it receded, and not till actually upon terra firma and under the very shadow of the tower could anyone feel quite sure as to its position.

Under the Abbey walls a narrow spit of gravel afforded a convenient landing-place, and here Thady moored the boat and brought out rods and tackle. A wide and tranquil pool stretched in front of the gravel spit, the water now pleasantly curled by a soft westerly breeze. The ripple of the water, the gentle sighing of the wind, the splash of a rising fish, the scurry of a water-hen with her little brood, the songs of the birds that nested about the Abbey walls, joined in the quiet repose of the scene, and seemed to accentuate the feeling of growth and movement in the air—the springing forth of flowers; the opening out of buds; the joyous renewal of animal and insect life.

"It is all very sweet, Thady, it would be sad to leave it," said Kate with a sigh, as she rested on the gunwale of the boat, and took in the whole scene with Thady in the foreground, busily putting together the long salmon rod, and with two or three gaudy salmon flies in his mouth, and

links of gut hanging round his neck, testing carefully every knot of the casting line.

Thady shook his head impatiently, as if to say how tantalising it was to be called upon for conversation with his mouth full of salmon flies. But he presently paused in his occupation, and, raising his head, seemed to listen intently. Then he cleared his mouth of the flies, which he stuck into his battered caubeen, and kneeling down placed an ear to the ground, still listening intently.

"Do ye hear nothing, Misthress darlin'?" he cried at last, "nothing but the stream and the birds? Do ye hear nothing like the towling of a bell, or are my ould ears deaving me?"

Kate listened too, and after awhile, perhaps from the force of imagination, she also began to fancy that she heard the dull sound of a ringing, as if from unknown depths, repeated at short but distinct intervals.

"Perhaps it is the Great Bell of Mullingar that is tolling," she said. "We hear it, you know, sometimes."

Thady shook his head despondently. "The wind does not set from Mullingar, my honey," he cried. "Sure 'tis Saint Mary's Bell we hear from the bottom of the pool,"—crossing himself devoutly. "'Tis the knell of Knockmagh. The angels guard and preserve us."

Kate O'Bryan turned pale. She knew what Thady meant. The legend of Saint Mary's Bell had been familiar to her from childhood—had been told her over and over again, but never too often by the old servants of the house. How Oliver Cromwell and his men had come to spoil the Abbey and burn down Knockmagh, but that the Fathers had warning a few hours beforehand, and had buried all their treasures deep in the earth, and thrown the great Abbey bell—all of gilded bronze with a silver clapper—into the middle of St. Coona's Pool, where it lies to this day; but not altogether silent, for whenever one of the O'Bryans is on the point of death, the silver clapper begins to move, and slowly tolls forth the solemn notes of the "Agony." The O'Bryans had earned this distinction as the chief benefactors of the Abbey in old times, having, indeed, been the donors of the bell itself, which an early O'Bryan had brought home across the seas—from Jerusalem itself, according to general belief.

Kate's eyes filled with tears as she

realised the dismal portent, which coincided too well with her own secret fears. Her father, once the most active of sportsmen and keenest of fishermen, had completely broken down this winter. Perhaps it was vexation and trouble as much as bodily disorders which had brought him low; but these things kill as surely as any other ailment when the frame has lost the elasticity of youth. Kate felt the omen, knowing at her heart that her father would die and leave her all alone in these sad and troubled days.

Just then a fine salmon flung itself bodily out of the water, gleaming for a moment silver bright in the air, and then falling back with a splash that echoed back from the precipitous banks on the other side.

"Arrah now, we are losing all the best of the morning," cried Thady, springing to his feet. "While the fish are laping out at us wid scorn;" and with hands trembling with excitement, he adjusted the rod, drew the line of tapered silk through the rings, attached the all important gut with the Colonel's two favourite flies on the stretcher and placed the rod in Miss O'Bryan's hands. "Now, Miss Kate darlin', if ye haven't forgot the turn of the wrist ould Thady shown ye, ye shall fling right over to the ring of foam beyant."

Kate was no novice, indeed, and yet her first cast was a good way short of the spot pointed out, but before the tail fly touched the water a big sea-trout dashed out at it, and hooked himself fairly out of the river. It was a fish of three or four pounds, but the spring of the powerful rod soon told upon the fish, and Thady had the landing-net under it, and brought it to bank without wasting any time. It was something to have scored already, and Kate made her next cast with more confidence. Again a silvery gleam, and the thrilling pull of a big fish, sent a rapturous throb of triumph and excitement through the girl's frame. This time she had hooked the monarch of the pool. Twice he leapt out of the water in angry amazement, and then he dashed across the river and back again, leaving a whirl of water in his trail, as he headed down the stream and plunged into the rapids. "Hold him up, Miss Kate, darlint, hold him up, we shall lose him if he gets among the stones beyant," cried Thady, as he dashed after the fish, wild with excitement, half in and half out of the water, flourishing the gleaming gaff, burning to share in the capture of the fish. Kate

was getting tired now, the rod was too heavy for her. Instead of her bringing the fish to land, it would surely pull her into the water. With her last despairing effort she thrust forward the butt of the rod—if the line held, she herself would break in two, Kate felt; but the line held and still she was not broken, while at last the fish was turned and came back suddenly and slowly, with many sudden darts and twists, up against the stream. Kate now regained her breath, and slowly reeled in her line, and presently deftly leading her fish towards the bank, Thady dexterously gaffed him and brought him out.

Then the pair sat down beside their victim and enjoyed a moment of unalloyed triumph. "'Tis the purtiest fish that will be caught in these waters this day," cried Thady, "the finest fish, take him altogether, I ever did see. Miss Kate, darlint, did you ever see a fish landed cleaner than that?"

"It was beautiful, Thady, and I didn't play him badly, either?"

"The Cornel couldn't have done better, and there is no higher praise than that," pronounced Thady magisterially.

Engrossed in the subject, neither of them had perceived the approach of a tall gaunt-looking fellow in a Scotch bonnet, with a plaid twisted round his shoulders, who, with noiseless slouching steps, had come quickly along the river-bank. With a quick rude grasp, he seized the rod that Miss O'Bryan still grasped in her small brown hands.

"I must have this rod, Miss, and the fish too that ye've caught. The waters belong to us now: if ye please, and ye're just trespassers."

Kate sprang to her feet in a blaze of indignation, "Do you know to whom you are talking?" she cried, stamping her foot on the ground. "Do you know that I am Miss O'Bryan?"

"I know my orders, Miss, and that's all I care to know; the feeshing's let, and the Company's orders air that all rods found trespassing air to be seized."

"These are our own waters, sir," cried Kate, trying to keep calm; "and you are the trespasser."

"I've no time to be arguing with yer," said the Scotch keeper, for such he was—the Company's head water-bailiff. "So—just hand me the rod and the feesh, and if ye've aught to complain of ye can bring me before the magistrate."

"Thady," cried Kate O'Bryan, still hold-

ing to the rod which the keeper was roughly trying to wrest from her. "Throw me this fellow into the river!"

Thady only waited for the word, his blood had been at boiling-point while the discussion lasted. In a regular combat probably the keeper would have had the best of it, for he was younger and far more powerful than his antagonist, but Thady launched himself upon him with such sudden fury that he was driven backwards towards the river, and, tripping at the edge, fell into the stream with a great splash and disappeared.

Miss O'Bryan gave a loud cry of dismay at the sight; all her indignation vanished in a moment. The man was in danger of his life. Springing into the boat, she pushed out into the stream and let it float with the current, watching anxiously for the reappearance of the keeper; he was sure to rise after his ducking; and sure enough there he was! She saw him, and gave a sob of thankfulness as she put out her arm to grasp him and help him into the boat. But it was only the man's plaid that she grasped and drew dripping into the boat. There was nothing else to be seen; the waters flowed on with swift and sullen force, gurgling and leaping as if in derision of drowning men. The minutes flew fast, and with each minute the chance of life decreased, and the certainty of death became more fixed. The drowning man must have been caught and held below by some root or clinging growth. Had the body been free, it would have appeared at the surface long ago. She looked round despairingly for help. There was not a soul in sight except Thady, who, with head bent down and limbs relaxed, was slowly following by the river-side.

A sense of hopelessness came over Kate as the boat grounded against the bank. "Can't you do anything, Thady?" she cried, wringing her hands in despair. "The man is perishing."

"He is perish't by now, Miss Kate," said Thady, sullenly. "Well, and what are the odds? 'Tis but a scoundrel the less in the world. And he had warning of it too from me."

"And what shall we do? Oh, Thady, what can we do?"

"I'll tell you what ye shall do, Miss," replied Thady. "Ye shall go back to the Castle, and take the car, and drive over to the police barracks. And ye shall tell them that Thady O'Connor has thrown the Scotch keeper into the water, and drowned him."

"But, Thady, they will put you in prison——"

"They will hang me," said Thady, sentimentally.

"And I shall have put the rope about your neck? And 'twas I bade you do it. Oh no, Thady; you can't think I'd be so base."

"Then if you don't spake now, Miss, ye must for ever hould your tongue. Sure there's none but Him above that knows what we've done this day."

Kate shuddered and hid her face in her hands; but when she looked up once more, her features were fixed and firm, her eyes steadfast and clear. "We will go home, Thady, and tell my father—he shall judge what it is right to do."

"I'll be satisfied with what the Colonel says," replied Thady, slowly. With that he shouldered the rod and fishing basket, and followed Miss O'Bryan along the path to the Castle. It was barely a mile across the neck of the isthmus—although nearly three in following the circuit of the river—and the Castle and Abbey were in full view of each other, the former embosomed in trees and luxuriant shrubs, while the latter stood bare, and gaunt, and ruined, in what was now a swampy waste. Half-way between the two points appeared a tall, good-looking young fellow, who was evidently on the look-out for Miss O'Bryan.

"Oh, Kate," he cried, seizing her warmly by the hand. "I am so glad to have found you. I came to speak to the Colonel on a matter of business, but I find that he is too ill to see me. I fear that he is worse since you left, for they say he is quite light-headed, and is continually calling for his Kate."

"Ah! why did I leave him," said Kate, "and with all the trouble that I had in my mind about him? Don't stop me, Mark, let me run to him."

"But, my darling," said Mark, "you must not take it like that. He is not very bad, it is just a spring fever; he will be all right with a little care."

Kate shook her head mournfully as she hurried on, Mark Butler following with his long stride, and Thady hanging behind with a dejected woe-begone air. But when they reached Knockmagh, they were told that the Colonel had fallen into a deep sleep. And after glancing into his room, and assuring herself that her father was really sleeping—and it made her heart ache, to see how changed and pinched his face had become in the last few hours—

Kate came down again to speak to Mark Butler. Her heart was so full of trouble that there seemed to be no more room for grief; but she knew that Mark could have no pleasant tidings to bring to Knockmagh.

Mark had to confess that his tidings were far from pleasant; he had come all the way from Dublin post-haste to put the Colonel on his guard. The Company who held a heavy mortgage on his estate had got a decree of possession, and, as the lands were not likely to be more profitable to them than they had been to the Colonel, who had got but little out of them for several years, it seemed probable that they would make a push to get hold of the Castle and the fisheries, which would let for a good yearly sum.

"And," said Kate, raising her eyes to heaven, "if my father is only spared to me, I'll gladly leave these walls and beg for him bare-footed along the roads."

She felt what she said. Here would be a penance, an expiation, that would lift the weight of guilt from her soul and suffer her to hope for peace beyond the grave.

"Oh, Kate," said Mark, his honest eyes filling with moisture at the picture she had suggested, "there is a better way than that. Marry me, Kate. Oh, I know what you would say," he went on, as Kate interrupted him with a gesture of denial; "but my father has changed since I spoke to him before, and my mother too. They see that my heart is set upon you, Kate, and surely the old feud between your father and mine is settled now. And my father will give me the money to redeem Knockmagh, and it shall be yours, Kate, yours and mine, and your father shall end his days here in peace."

"'Tis all a dream," said Kate sadly, thrusting back the strong arm that would have enfolded her. "Do you think my father would live on a guest in his own house—the guest of his old enemy's son? No, Mark. Do your mother's bidding. Go back to your Lady Louisa, that everybody says is dying to have you."

"Ah, Kate," cried Mark joyously. "I see that you are jealous a bit. And would you be jealous if you did not love me a trifle?"

"I don't say no," said Kate, "just the least of a trifle, once perhaps. But, Mark, with all that there's a trouble about me you can never share. There is something on my mind that bids me never think of love or

marriage. As long as my father lives, I'll stay with him; and, when I've closed my eyes, I'll go to my mother's sister, she is the Mother Superior of the Convent at Mullingar, you know, and there I'll end my days."

Mark argued, persisted, entreated, all in vain. He could make no impression upon Kate's resolution, nor induce her to share her troubles, whatever they might be, with one who loved her so much. At last he rode away determined, at all events, to try to put off the execution of the decree. It would be a burning shame to turn out the old Colonel in sickness and distress. Long ago the country would have risen to defend the O'Bryans, a word from whom would have gone further than a decree from the Lord Chief Justice. But all was changed now. The "boys" had their own business to attend to, and nobody cared a better whether the O'Bryans went or stayed.

As Kate saw her lover ride away, and turned from the gate, sad and unhearted, she was accosted by the groom who hung about the place, and whom Thady had despatched to bring back the boat.

"Av ye plase, Miss O'Bryan, I've brought along your schawl that's washed in wet. Will I take it round to the kitchen and bid them dry it for you?"

Kate turned upon the lad quite white with horror. It was the dead man's schawl that the lad held up before her. She had left it in the boat, and thought no more about it. The first impulse was to bid the lad throw it into the river, and then she thought of the danger of the boy's chattering about such a strange proceeding.

"Give it to me, Phil," she said, after a moment's reflection; and she took the schawl to her own room and mechanically hung over some pegs to dry.

There it seemed to suggest the form of the Scotch keeper so strongly that she could not bear to look at it. But there she should stay, she said to herself. If she must not reveal, neither would she conceal, and, hanging there, it should remind her continually of her crime.

Towards evening the Colonel was more lucid. The doctor had been to see him and had sent him a draught. He had not much to say as to his patient's state, but he did not seem to take a cheerful view of the case. The Colonel rambled a good deal still, and turned over his law papers, which he insisted should be brought to him. He tried to explain things to Kate, but he

mixed up present and past transactions so hopelessly that she could make nothing of his instructions. Again the Colonel fell into a heavy sleep, and Kate arranged to sit up the first part of the night with him.

The Colonel's bed-room was a fine stately chamber, which occupied the whole of the principal floor of the old tower, which had been the stronghold of other days. It had handsome, carved chimney-pieces of stone; and a broad, open hearth, where a peat fire was now smouldering. A winding staircase of stone communicated with the vaulted room below—an arrangement which had been found inconvenient in one particular. The O'Bryans were tall and massive in build, and when the chief of the house happened to die in his bed—as sometimes chanced in these degenerate days—it was found impossible, after the modern fashion of coffins came in, to get the dead O'Bryan down the staircase. Hence, about a hundred and fifty years ago, a square hole had been driven through the vaulting, through which, when need was, the coffin could be lowered. The boarding of the floor clearly showed this opening, which was just at the foot of the Colonel's bed. To-night those boards creaked horribly. It was as if somebody was trying to prise them open.

Kate sat and listened without either fear or surprise. Her mind was braced to endure anything; and a distinct apparition from the unknown world would have been even welcome to her, as a relief from the dull suspense and expectancy that had taken possession of her. But nothing came. The moon was shining brightly, and now sent a gleam through the narrow lancet window of the tower—the window that looked over towards the Abbey, where was still the burial-place of the O'Bryans. Full and round shone the moon in the solemn, placid sky, silvers the tall Abbey tower, and darting a bright beam among the ripples of the dark pool beyond. Kate opened the window and looked out. The calm and tranquillity of the scene were refreshing. From the river came a deep, tremulous murmur, and, indistinctly mingling with it, a soft musical note, which, as a breeze stole across, rose into a distinct and rapid knell. Her father had heard it, too. He was awake, and, raising himself on one elbow, he was listening intently.

"'Tis for me, Kate," he said softly, as his daughter came to his side. "I expected it, darling, and, but for leaving you,

I'd be glad to be gone. My head is clear now, my dear, and it may not be again, and so I give you my blessing; and Kate, my wishes are that you shall marry Mark, if he asks you again, which I think he will. And Kate, mind you tell his father, Sir William, that I forgive him all the dirty, unneighbourly actions he has done against me. You'll put it like that, Kate; you won't let the creature off too cheap!"

"Indeed I won't!" replied Kate, sobbing; "but, father dear, I'll not marry Mark. I feel that I have a vocation, and, if you leave me, I'll join the Sacred Heart at Mullingar."

The Colonel shook his head doubtfully.

"Well, it isn't for me in my last hours to say anything against it; and the trifle of money your mother left you will serve for your dower. And Kate, if it's going to be that way, you might speak a bit sharper to Sir William."

After this the Colonel dozed off again, and presently fell into a quiet, tranquil sleep. If it had not been for the warning they had received, Kate would have believed that he was getting better.

The morning light brought its troubles, too.

"Oh, for the light heart of yesterday!" said Kate to herself as she prepared to face the anxiety and suspense that awaited her. While she was still at breakfast in the little room that commanded the principal entrance, she saw a woman with a child in her arms dragging herself wearily up the drive. Presently, Thady made his appearance, with an appealing, warning look upon his face:

"Miss O'Bryan, there's a woman says she's the wife of yonder Scotch keeper beyant."

"I'll see her, Thady," replied Kate, restraining her strong desire to burst into tears.

Andrew, the Scotch keeper, had married a woman of the country, one of the Joyces, who are not just the same as the other West-Country people. She was a dark little woman, and ready enough with her tongue, as Andrew knew to his cost, although it was said that he gave her plenty of excuse for her scolding ways. But she was quiet and deferential enough before Miss O'Bryan. She had come to her on account of the trouble she was in about her husband, who had not been seen since early on the previous day. Andrew had left her in a very bad temper, having his head full of whisky, and she knew that he

had business with the Colonel; and perhaps he had been impudent enough; and, if he had been clapped in prison for the night, no doubt he was rightly served, and she would make no complaint. Only let her have him now, for she was weary and sad in watching for him, and the child had been crying for his daddy ever since."

"I'd cry with you too," said Kate, "if crying were any good. But why should you think that we have been keeping your good man; and where should we hide him?"

The woman replied, looking uneasily about her, that she had been told there were dungeons and secret places about the Castle, where people might be shut up and nobody ever the wiser. But if Miss O'Bryan passed her word that Andrew was not there, and that she knew nothing about him, his wife must search for him elsewhere. Kate, feeling that she was piling crime upon crime, gave the required assurance. She gave the woman, too, all the money she had about her, and Mrs. Andrew departed somewhat consoled, but only half satisfied.

After that, there were no more enquiries for the missing man for a week or more. The days had passed without any discovery, and in the most complete tranquillity. If there was a decree out against the Castle, nobody attempted to execute it. The Colonel still was lying in the same weak, sinking state. Mark rode up to the lodge every morning to ask after the invalid; but no one else came near. The report of the family misfortunes had got abroad, and the people of the neighbourhood declared that to visit them under such distressing circumstances would be unwarranted intrusion. Thady, meantime, was the good genius of the house. He managed the fishing. How he did it Kate did not care to enquire, but he sold the fish. Salmon was worth half-a-crown a pound just then, even by the river-side, and he kept the household going with the money and provided all the dainties that could be imagined to tempt the Colonel's appetite.

Then the keeper's wife began to haunt the neighbourhood of the Castle. Sometimes along the river-bank, sometimes within the ground, looking up at each ivy-covered window and scrutinising the machicolations over the corners of the house and over the great doorway, as if she suspected her husband was hidden among them. Thady often entered into

conversation with her. He was free from remorse anyhow, and feared nothing but the strong arm of the law.

"Tis the ninth day, Miss O'Bryan," said Thady one morning as Kate stood on the terrace and watched the river glide by—"the ninth day since the Scotchman was lost, and they say now that if he was drowned he is sure to rise, and the widow is walking the banks all day to search for him."

"Then you're satisfied she is a widow, eh, Mr. Thady?" said the voice of one who had stolen up unawares.

Thady started guiltily, for though the new comer was dressed in plain clothes, he recognised him at once as the superintendent of police.

"Your pardon, Miss O'Bryan," said the official, raising his hat, "but I must beg permission to ask a few questions of your servant. Now, Thady, I'm told you know something about Andrew that's missing, and more's the reason you have to clear yourself as you were known to be ill friends and had threatened each other the week before in Widow Shehan's shebeen. Now, Andrew was last seen alive at eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning, on his way to the Castle, where he had processes to serve, as I'm informed."

"You know a dale more about the matter than I do, Mr. Superintendent, it seems," replied Thady, doggedly.

"Don't answer any questions if the answers tend to criminate you, my man," rejoined the police officer adroitly. "But if you can clear yourself——"

"I think I can answer for Thady," interposed Kate. "On the day you mention, Thady was with me all the morning, and I think I could account for every moment of his time all the day."

"That would be an unexceptionable alibi, Miss O'Bryan," said the officer, politely. "You are quite sure about the day?"

"Perfectly sure," replied Kate, with difficulty smothering a sigh.

"And you saw nothing of the man yourself?"

"Nothing," echoed Kate, feeling herself to be the vilest of the vile.

After a few more searching questions, the police officer, apparently satisfied, turned away and mounted his horse which another mounted constable was holding for him by the gate. When the noise of the hoofs had died away, Thady took Miss O'Bryan's hand, and kissed it. "Ah, Miss

ate," he cried, "I would die for you any minute."

Nothing happened further just then; Andrew's body was still missing, when a car arrived one day from the station, six miles away. And the car contained no less a personage than Mr. Gagan, the Colonel's Dublin law agent, whose costs and charges had long contributed to the impoverishment of an overburdened estate. Still the lawyer was an old friend, and an ardent admirer of Kate, who ran to receive him with one of her old charming smiles; "But my father is too ill to see you, I fear; indeed, if the business is only more trouble, I think it would kill him on the spot."

"Ahem," said Mr. Gagan. "Well! the tidings I bring are sorrowful indeed; still he ought to know. His cousin Mike is dead—Mike O'Bryan, who was out in that misguided rising in 1848, when the police barracks were attacked and a policeman shot. 'Twas said that Mike fired the shot, and he was hiding here in the holes and corners of the old Castle, and your father risking his commission, and his life maybe, in harbouring the young rebel; and rowed Mike, with his own hands by creeks and gullies, that nobody knew but those two; aye, and took to the broad Atlantic in a little cockboat, and were picked up by an American steamer just in time. Aye, they were staunch friends those O'Bryans; and more to say that Mike never forgot his cousin, and was doing well in America—not a word to the Cornel, but I fear 'twas pigs! Anyhow, he's dead, poor boy! leaving neither wife nor child, but every penny to the Cornel. A hundred thousand dollars. Reckon that up, Miss O'Bryan."

So it was not for the Colonel after all that the Bell of St. Mary had been tolling, but for another of the old line who was dying thousands of miles away. The knowledge of this, and perhaps the comfort of knowing that he should leave Kate provided for anyhow, seemed to put the thought of dying out of the Colonel's head; and before long he could get out into the sunshine as the weather grew warmer, and presently took his rod in hand once more.

But poor Kate, when the first pleasant gleam of sunshine had passed, fell into a state of fixed despondency. Her father thought that love was at the bottom of it, and he even urged Mark Butler to come and see her. But she would have nothing

to say to Mark but the coldest civility; and as her father grew better and stronger she talked of making a retreat for awhile in the Convent at Mullingar. One thing that her father noticed was that the Scotch keeper's wife worried Kate a good deal, and yet she would never hear of the woman being sent away without seeing her. And, indeed, the woman's manner had changed a good deal of late. She was no longer subdued and deferential, but disposed to be threatening and exacting. One day after an interview with this woman, Kate came to her father and asked him to give her two hundred pounds, without asking her any questions. The Colonel was rather surprised, but gave the money without a word. All that went to Mrs. Andrew, who had made up her mind to emigrate and join a relative of hers in America.

All was ready for Mrs. Andrew's departure and her last visit was to the Castle, as she said, to say good-bye to Miss O'Bryan. Kate received her with touching humility. What she had done for this poor woman she felt was nothing in comparison with what she had robbed her of. She longed to tell her all and ask her forgiveness. The woman herself was softened at the feeling that Kate displayed, but she could not resist the temptation of delivering a final stroke.

"And now, Miss, as it will be cauld at say, mebbe ye will give me the plaid that ye have of my good man's?"

"Oh," cried Kate, turning deadly pale; "then you know all."

"Arrah then, honey," cried the woman, with a sudden merciful impulse; "so I do, and a deal more, blessed be the saints. It's gone to my heart to trouble you as I have done, but what was I to do? He would have it so."

"What do you mean?" gasped Kate. "Who is he?"

"Why, who but Andrew, who was drowned. Drown my Andrew! why, he is more skilful in the water than an eel! The minute your man threw him in, he saw what might be made of it; seeing, moreover, that he was behind-hand with the license money, and the receiver coming next day to gather it. What was it to hide among the bushes on the other side, and creep away and off to Dublin? 'Twas a week or more before he let me know, so I had my share of the trouble, Miss. And now I wish you every luck and happiness wid your sweetheart, for you'll never see Andrew and me any more."

The mind suddenly released from tension does not recover its balance all at once, and bright as matters now looked at Knockmagh, it was long before Kate's laugh was heard to ring as merrily as of old. As for Thady, he showed more indignation at having been taken in by the "scoundrel" of a water bailiff, than relief at the news of his safety. The Colonel was quite in the dark as to much that had happened during his illness, and one of the first enjoyments he promised himself out of his unexpected inheritance was a lawsuit with Sir William Butler about certain rights of turbary over a neighbouring bog that had long been a bone of contention between them. But Sir William proved unexpectedly complacent. He came in state with his wife to call at Knockmagh to congratulate the Colonel on his recovery, and to propose in form an alliance between the rival houses. The Colonel remembered Kate's declaration that she would never marry Mark, and was all the more ready to pronounce, that while he highly esteemed the honour of such an alliance—he would never think of putting any constraint upon his daughter's inclinations.

"Then I shall send Mark to plead his own cause," said the Baronet jovially.

Mark came like a whirlwind, and, as

soon as his horse's hoofs were heard in the avenue, the Colonel turned out with his rod along the river. He liked the horse well enough, and he would not like to see his dismal face as he went empty away. "T'will be a fine blow to those Butlers at the same," muttered the Colonel, making the best of the matter.

The Colonel stayed out three or four hours with little sport to speak of, the weather being bright and the water low. But coming back along the terrace, thinking that all the trouble would be over, he looked over the balustrade; and there, seated upon the steps by the river, were Kate and Mark as cosy as possible, she with a hand upon his shoulder, and he with an arm round her waist. The Colonel "hemmed" loudly, and Kate jumped up in confusion. "Ah, now, it's everywhere we've been looking for you, father dear, to give us your blessing, Mark and me. But I'm not going to leave you, for Mark is coming here to be your son and heir."

"And may ye live long and happy together!" cried the Colonel, his face working with emotion. "Aye, long after I'm sleeping in the old Abbey yard. And Mark, if you treat her well, and live like a true O'Bryan, I wouldn't be surprised if in your last hours you'd be honoured by hearing the Knell of Knockmagh."

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
THE REIGN OF THE ROSES	1	NIALL	30
IN GLITTER OR IN GOLD	9	"No!"	39
A NOTE TOO MUCH.	20	A PREVENTIVE YARN	48
THE MESSAGE FROM THE SEA. A POEM	20		

THE REIGN OF THE ROSES.

By "RITA."

Author of "*Gretchen*," "*Darby and Joan*," "*Dame Durden*," etc.

CHAPTER I.

"The year of the rose is brief,
From the first blade blown to the sheaf,
From the thin green leaf to the gold,
It has time to be sweet and grow old,
To triumph, and leave not a leaf!"

SWINBURNE.

"It is not so very long," she said, half sad, half smiling, her eyes raised over the rose he had just plucked for her. She stood in a garden of roses, and he thought she looked like one herself, with her skin of cream, and the pale gold of her hair, and the soft white folds of her simple gown.

"No," he said, like an echo. "Not so very long. A year—only a year; twelve months out of one's life. Twelve months of doubts, hopes, fears——"

"And work," she added softly. "I suppose you mean to do some, if you are really going to undertake the post."

"I can't very well refuse. They make such a point of it. You see I worked the mine in the first instance, and I understand it thoroughly; and then the sum they offer is large. It will make a rich man of me——"

"I never thought you were mercenary, Mr. Strahan."

"A man," he said, "may have an object in his life for which money is absolutely necessary. Would you call him mercenary if he tried to gain it?"

"No, if the object was a good one. What is yours? May I know?"

The blue eyes met the grave, almost sad glance of the brown, soft orbs which made almost the only beauty of Sebastian Strahan's face. It was not a face likely to attract beauty-loving seventeen, for it is only with ripened judgement, and oft-times a saddened experience, that we note the real charm of faces that are independent of mere features or colouring, and owe their attractiveness to the nobility of mind, the richness of thought, or the moral grandeur of character. Such a face was Sebastian Strahan's.

To Mavis Wynne he represented only a large and serious minded, middle-aged man, clever enough to awe her, entertaining enough to amuse her, and old enough to be as safe a companion as her own father, and, therefore, quite out of danger from her coquetries.

She was very young, she was very pretty, and she had been very much admired. She had just come home after a visit to her aunt in London, who had introduced her to a fair share of the season's gaieties. She had had three proposals, and refused them all, for the quite sufficient reason that she was perfectly heart-whole, and that marriage looked something of a bugbear, necessitating "settling down," "domestic duties," and total abstinence from her favourite pastime—flirtation.

At home she had found Sebastian Strahan—a friend of the grey-haired, learned, and simple-hearted Professor who

had the felicity of calling her his daughter. The Professor had introduced him to her as an engineer—a mining engineer—and she had a dim idea that he had also done something very wonderful in the matter of oil wells, in some wild place in America. She never could remember the name or fix the locality any less vaguely than being somewhere near the Rocky Mountains. But that was quite enough for her. She really did not see that the name of a place mattered, when it was so very far away, and must be so very disagreeable.

He had not impressed her very much, except by being rather silent and having a habit of regarding her steadily and seriously when she rattled off any of her random speeches. One night, she had asked him saucily whether the habit of discovery was so strong within him that he was attempting to apply it in her case, and he had smiled and said, "Perhaps." After that she had been a little less frivolous, and a little more attentive to his conversations with her father, whom she never called anything but "Professor."

A week or two passed on. She was growing used to the quiet companionship, the gentle, grave chivalry of manner, so totally unlike that of the "masher youths" of London society; used to have him drive her pony-carriage, row her boat, and walk by her side through the quaint old rose-garden in the evenings of the coming summer; used to his admiring, almost reverential attention, when she sang in her low, sweet contralto, the familiar ballads in her dead mother's music-books; used to these and many other things that were suddenly and startlingly brought to a close by his announcement that he must go abroad again for a year; perhaps more; but, certainly, a year.

A year, and this was his last evening, and he was standing beside her among the roses, and looking with strangely pathetic eyes at the fair young beauty of her face, and the grace of her slender form.

She met the gaze as she put that question to him—"May I know?"

He turned aside somewhat abruptly. "It wouldn't interest you," he said; and his eyes turned seawards, and the lines round his mouth seemed to deepen into the hardness of resolve.

"How can you tell?" she asked, lifting the flowers to her face, and looking at him with that mischievous, provocative glance that he knew too well for his own peace

of mind. "You don't know what will interest me. You think I am a very frivolous person, because I consider a gown more interesting than mining shares, and the subject of 'floating companies' has a tendency to send me to sleep. But I suppose your 'object' is something more important than this, or else you wouldn't sacrifice comfort, and friends, and—England, for the mere sake of money!"

"Do you think," he said, looking at her again, "that money is such a very important thing?"

"Unimportant! Oh, no! I love it, and all its magic powers, most dearly; but—well, I don't think I could give up everything for it, as you are doing."

"I do not think," he said gently, "that I am giving up everything. I have no relations, and very few friends. I am a restless being, and travelling is almost second nature to me. There is nothing to keep me here—and—and——"

"Is there anything to send you away?" she asked suddenly. "I offer the suggestion, as you seem in a difficulty."

"Yes," he said abruptly, "there is—something."

"And connected, of course, with the object," she said demurely. "You are quite mysterious, Mr. Strahan! I always thought you straightforward."

"Perhaps," he said, "you might attribute the alteration to circumstances. You hate to discuss business. Let us change the subject."

"So," she persisted pettishly, "I am not a fit recipient for your confidence. Very well, Mr. Strahan, I can be unfeeling when I choose."

"Not to-night, I hope," he said earnestly, "and not to me. I am not young enough to treat any parting as a jest. It goes hard with a man of my years to look on youth and beauty and kindly faces, and know that time will draw a veil over them, and the shadow of changing years will dim them, and that 'farewell' has more of bitterness than of hope in its reiteration."

"Oh," she said, with a little shudder, "you make me feel melancholy as well as yourself. You will come back, of course, as you have done before—good-bye is only a longer good-night; there will be another summer for the roses, and another meeting for us—in this same garden, under these same trees. Why should there not?"

"A year," he said, "will make a great difference in your life. You will not

stand still. You will want to live—to know—to feel. All is possible to you at your age, and the possible holds always hope."

"And happiness," she suggested. "Now prophesy me that. I do so want to be happy."

"Heaven grant you may be," he said. "But it is not easy to find happiness."

"I must make my own then," she said, laughing. "For I can't picture myself without it. Can you?"

He looked at her gravely, intently, but with a yearning tenderness in the soft brown eyes that made them misty and uncertain of vision. "No," he said, very low. "It seems your nature to breathe sunshine and joy."

"It is my nature to want them," she said, still smiling. "Would you like to know my future?"

"I should," he exclaimed, with an earnestness that startled her.

"And whom I shall marry? for I suppose I shall marry some day," she went on merrily. "I have formed no ideal. All my girl friends used to have one shrined in their respective hearts. They were funny creatures, some of them. In the matter of moustaches and height, they were simply stupendous; intellect was rarely considered; means and position were however, important. How odd it all seems! And life looks such a visionary thing. Do you know I was thinking this evening when I looked at myself in the glass in my room, how I had stood before that same glass when I was quite a little child, and wondered about myself, and who I really was, and what I should be like when I was grown up at seventeen? And now I am nearly eighteen, and I looked in the same glass and thought and felt there was a difference in me; that even now I don't seem to know myself, or what I shall become. And I wonder to-night what I shall be like at twenty, or even five-and-twenty? That sounds awfully old, but I don't mind telling you. You see nothing has happened to me yet—no great joy or great sorrow. Everything has to come, and I am always wondering when the first commencement will be, and what it will be like, and whether it will change me? What do you think?"

He looked at her, his face grave and full of pain; so deep, so sharp, some random word had struck.

"I cannot tell you what I think," he said; "or, perhaps, I dare not."

"Oh," she said, with a little wilful misinterpretation, "I would not be angry, as it is your last evening. Of course I know I am not worth speculating about; but if you had ever given me a thought, in the abstract, as something different to mines, and shafts, and geological discoveries, I should like to know its nature."

"I am afraid," he said, with an odd little smile, "I have given you a great many thoughts; but I prefer keeping them to myself just at present."

"You are unkind," she said, with a pout of her soft, red lips. "And I will not sing to you to-night as a punishment."

"I thought you were going out to-night. Didn't you say your friend, Miss Kirkman, had a musical party, and that you were going round there at nine o'clock?"

"True. I had almost forgotten. They are very stupid, those musical parties of the Kirkmans. Everyone wants to sing or play, and no one knows how to do it."

"A sweeping denunciation of amateur talent," he said. "But who is this?" he broke off abruptly—"A visitor?"

She turned and looked in the direction of the house.

"I don't know who it is," she said in some surprise.

The stranger advanced and raised his hat.

"I believe I have the honour of addressing Miss Wynne," he said, with easy grace. "Your father told me I should find you in the garden. I am the bearer of a note from your cousin, Miss Kirkman. There is some special duet that she wishes you to bring this evening, and she forgot to mention it when she saw you."

Their eyes met. There was no mistaking the admiration in his; and the pretty shy droop of the girl's eyelashes betrayed a little embarrassment.

Sebastian Strahan drew aside and looked from one to the other of the handsome youthful faces.

"She will go to-night," he said in his heart, "and the party will not be stupid; and I dare not speak; and it is my last evening. To-morrow she will laugh and call me mercenary. Mercenary! Good Heavens! when I could sacrifice every farthing in the world only to stay here—only to be within sight and sound of her sweet presence just while the roses live. And Fate denies me another day—another hour!"

CHAPTER II.

The time of lovers is brief
 From the fair first joy to the grief,
 That tells when love is grown old,
 From the warm wild kisses to the cold,
 From the red to the white rose leaf!

THE autumn was waning—the reign of the roses was over. Sunshine was fitful, and grey mists hid the skies and the sea. The girlish figure paced the quaint old garden walk with quieter step, and the sweet face looked graver and more thoughtful than it had looked in those summer evenings which had almost faded from her memory.

For something deeper and stronger had taken their place, and its birth dated from the evening when she had first met Captain Gordon. The attraction had been mutual, though no word of love had yet escaped the young officer's lips; but, then, words go for very little in that early stage of love-making, which is so subtle, so hard to express, and yet so palpable to the recipient.

He was constantly coming to The Cliffs on some excuse or another, and though his visit to his friend, Mr. Kirkman, had long been over, it was surprising how often he managed to run down from town just from Saturday to Monday, and how beneficial he found the sea-breezes of the quiet Sussex coast.

And yet he was not deeply enough in love to bring forward any formal declaration. He had not yet looked upon himself in the light of a marrying man, and he was not sure whether Miss Wynne was rich or not. Rumour said "yes;" but an officer in the army owes it to himself and his compeers to turn a deaf ear to rumour in certain cases, and not commit himself to a matrimonial error.

Trevor acknowledged that Mavis Wynne was a very good excuse, but still his pay and his private means were not sufficient even for himself, and his debts might have been fairly spread over the expenditure of two ordinary men with families. He thought of the debts, and his brow became gloomy. Of course it all came from belonging to such an extravagant regiment. A fellow must do as his brother officers did, and in London money seemed to melt imperceptibly away, how or where he could never tell.

Often as he sauntered by Mavis Wynne's side, or listened to her sweet voice, he felt an irresistible longing to confess his love;

but then the consequences faced him in dread array, and he knew if he married at all, he must marry money.

That had been impressed on his mind by friends and relatives, ever since he had come to years of discretion. Besides, there was a certain red-haired heiress to whom he had paid great attention during the past season, and whose father had purchased a magnificent estate not far from his own home in Warwickshire. She was quite willing to pick up the handkerchief if he dropped it at her large feet; and he had almost given her to understand that he intended to drop it there, at no very distant period. And then Fate must throw this girl in his way, with her delicate, white-rose beauty, and her charming ways and grace of speech and manner, and she haunted him as the red-haired heiress never had and never could do; and against his will, and still more against his better judgement, he found himself by her side.

Meanwhile the Professor, though to all intents and purposes blind to the details of life, and absorbed only by abstruse and direfully dull sciences, watched the progress of events from behind his spectacles. He loved his fair young daughter very dearly, and he would not have had her happiness jeopardised for all the world might give. As a specimen of womanhood in its youth, and innocence, and unworldliness, she had been an interesting study to him, and Mavis would have been infinitely surprised had she known that she herself and her various idiosyncrasies had often formed the subject of long discussions between her father and Sebastian Strahan.

As Captain Gordon's visits became more frequent, and the girl's gay and mirthful spirits took a soft and serious gravity upon them, he pondered as to whether the young officer was quite worthy of such a precious charge as this young and tenderly nourished life. Sometimes he resolved to speak to him on the subject, but courage failed, and he feared to appear intrusive. It was somewhat curious that Trevor Gordon, on his side, was equally anxious to sound the old Professor, and equally fearful of being pounced upon as a son-in-law if he did anything so compromising.

On one wet, gloomy, autumn evening, however, he had strolled over as was his wont from his uncle's place, Fernlea, to The Cliffs. He was shown into the pretty, lamp-lit drawing-room, and to his surprise

found the Professor there alone. He was sitting by the fire reading.

"I hope," said the young man, after the usual greetings, "that Miss Wynne is quite well."

"No," said the Professor, glancing keenly at the handsome, bronzed face through his glasses; "she has a very bad cold."

After a moment or two he added: "She has gone to bed; I recommended her to go."

"I am very sorry," said the young man. "I—in fact I came to say good-bye, as there is every probability that my regiment may be ordered abroad again."

"Indeed!" said the Professor with no appearance of regret. "I suppose you like the prospect. Military men are fond of change."

"Yes," he said. "I like the prospect, I have had a long spell of idleness." Then he looked straight at the spectacles and said abruptly: "Do you think it is quite impossible that I can see Miss Wynne before I go? We have spent so many pleasant hours together—and—and I should be very sorry not to say good-bye in person."

The Professor pushed his spectacles away, and ruffled his grey hair with a perturbed and somewhat irresolute air.

"Good-byes," he said, "are not pleasant things. Why trouble to say them? She is not well, and she has had some bad news; I really do not like to disturb her."

"Bad news," faltered Trevor Gordon. "Of what nature?"

"Business," said the Professor. "Dry, uninteresting money matters. Perhaps you are not aware she has a fortune of her own—a considerable fortune? It was left her by a relation of her mother—an American. He was very rich. I am afraid to say how many thousands of dollars he possessed, and he had no near relation but my wife, and the money comes to Mavis when she is twenty-one."

The young man's face grew radiant. Here was this garrulous old gentleman giving him that ardently desired information without the least difficulty. It was really too delightful of him.

The spectacles had come down again over the kindly grey eyes. The Professor's face was abstracted and almost dull.

"I am sorry to say," he went on, "that a month or two ago, I had bad news about these dollars. They were invested in some oil wells in America, and the principal could not be touched till Mavis

was of age. A friend of mine, a mining engineer of great experience, was staying here at the time when the news came that the supplies had stopped. He said it was impossible, and at great personal risk and inconvenience, went out to investigate matters for himself. To-night, we had a letter from him. The wells have been deserted, and the country round is in the hands of one of the most vicious and blood-thirsty tribes of Indians. The money is all lost, and poor Mavis will have to do without her fortune. You cannot be surprised that she is a little upset."

Every drop of blood seemed to have deserted the young officer's cheeks. He blessed the friendly spectacles and the dullness of penetration with which he credited the prosy old Professor. He sat there murmuring vague regrets and feeling that he had almost committed himself, and could never be grateful enough to that most useful "cold" which had taken Mavis off to her own chamber to-night of all nights. He loved her; he almost fancied she loved him; but all the love in their hearts could not bridge the sea of debt and difficulty which lay before him, and he felt thankful for so successfully resisting temptation, and being enabled now to beat a retreat with a free conscience.

It was all quite fair, quite honourable. However much he had looked, and conveyed, and implied, he had never absolutely said anything; and she would hear that he had been summoned away, and she would soon forget him. She was a little bit of a flirt after all, and not the sort of girl to break her heart, or go into a decline or anything of that sort. Of the pain of silent endurance, of the agony of shame, the tortures of expectation unrealised and hopeless, he never thought.

As every moment ticked itself into the past and brought nearer to his own view the spectacle of his own narrow escape, his feelings of self-gratulation bordered more nearly on relief; and at last he rose to go, leaving a purely conventional message of regret for Miss Wynne, and almost nervously apprehensive of meeting her before he was fairly on his way to his uncle's house.

But Mavis was safely out of his way, weeping passionate tears over the manly, kindly-worded letter that had all too surely brought shipwreck to her hopes; for she knew well enough that Trevor Gordon

could never marry a portionless girl. Alice Kirkman had told her that often enough; and had not her hero himself hinted it in a thousand graceful, ambiguous phrases, that now came back to her memory all barbed with pain so sharp she scarce could endure it, and yet seemed to feel its presence was to be about her life and in her heart for all the years to come?

CHAPTER III.

But the days droop one by one,
And a chill, soft wind is begun
In the heart of the rose-red maze,
That weeps for the rose-leaf days,
And the reign of the rose is undone.

A LITTLE later in that same autumn time Sebastian Strahan sat alone in the log hut of those rough quarters where he had betaken himself. A batch of papers and letters had come in by the mail and been forwarded on to him. He had reserved one letter to the last, perhaps because he so earnestly desired to read it; but he took it up now, and a rush of memories starting up in contrast to his own loneliness almost overpowered him as he looked at the small, neat handwriting of the Professor. He drew his hand across his brow and set himself resolutely to read the closely-covered pages before him. His face did not change its hue, though his brow grew sterner, and the kindly mouth quivered suddenly beneath its dark moustache. He read on, slowly, determinedly, every word—every line—till he reached the end. Then he laid the letter down, knowing that one paragraph in it had burnt itself into his brain as with letters of fire.

"That he loved her, I have no doubt—that she loved him, there is less. It goes to my heart to see her so changed. If it had not been for the loss of her fortune they might have been married. As it is—he has gone abroad, and the poor child tries to keep a brave face; but there is something missing—and I feel helpless to comfort her."

So it had come. He had felt sure it would; and, now that he knew, he wondered dimly why the certainty was so full of pain. He remembered the bright girlish figure, the lovely white-rose face, the laughing eyes—the random words spoken on that last evening they had spent together: "You see, nothing has happened to me yet . . . it has all to come."

He pushed the papers aside and sprang

to his feet, and went to the door of his rough hut, and stood there for long, looking at the quiet sky and the brightly-shining stars. And with every moment that he stood there his thoughts were busy with plans and purposes that, vague at first, soon shaped themselves into definite form, and nerved his resolute brain, and thrilled his great tender nature with a hope that, to any outside listener, would have sounded almost Quixotic.

"It can be done," he said half aloud, looking up to the quiet stars. "It must be done," he added, as his face took that look of iron resolution which enterprise and responsibility always brought. "And I must do it."

His face grew white, and his lips shook with a momentary tremor. It was no light matter this—no easy duty, attended with little risk and holding rich guerdon of praise and glory for the future. No, it was a hard, obnoxious, toilsome task, to be undertaken at great personal risk and the sacrifice of wealth, and ease, and comfort. But the knightliness and unselfishness of character which had so distinguished him throughout life, were scarcely likely to forsake him now. It seemed hard to think of a girl's young life wrecked at its outset, and for a mere matter of money. Why should her fortune be lost? Five years could never have exhausted those supplies that he remembered. He must man an expedition—he must secure men and forces to guard against surprise by those turbulent tribes of Indians—and set to work once more to bore and test the supposed exhausted springs.

It would need money—a great deal of money; but, then, he had plenty, and it was almost all invested in American securities, and could be readily converted into cash. Here was an opportunity for showing what courage and science could do. If he re-established this oil well and set it going once more, he would save Mavis Wynne's fortune, as well as repay himself for his present outlay. Of that latter consideration, he thought little; but it seemed a desirable, indeed a necessary, thing to save the girl's fortune, and with its restoration give her back the happiness she had lost.

"No doubt he loves her," he thought, "who could help it? And they are both young, and life lies all before them. It is meet I should stand aside and let youth and beauty pass on to happiness, while I am forgotten. She will never know that

I was mad enough to love her . . . that I shall love her all my life—all my life."

Steadily and unwaveringly Sebastian Strahan went to work. Steadily and unwaveringly, in the face of obstacles, scoffs, and hardships, he formed his little company, and at their head went bravely forth to face the hazards of his enterprise.

The long dreary winter passed in comparative inaction, but with the first month of spring the work began. Huts were made habitable, a settlement arose like magic, and Sebastian Strahan soon proved that his geological knowledge was not at fault. Experimental wells were sunk, and some thirty-three feet below the surface of the forsaken spot, the welcome fluid gushed out in apparently inexhaustible abundance.

The news soon spread. A company in Massachusetts took up the speculation, and Sebastian Strahan knew that his object was secure. Mavis would have her fortune and her lover, and he would be the unsuspected and unthanked donor of both.

He wrote to the Professor telling him of his success, and bidding him enlighten the young suitor on the matter; but the Professor, as he read the letter, seemed suddenly to recognise the writer's secret—to fathom at first dimly, but gradually with greater clearness, the reason for conduct so altogether bewildering, and yet so heroic.

Why should Sebastian Strahan do this thing? Why should he, at his years, sacrifice health, comfort, perhaps life itself, for the sake of a girl's happiness? As he read, he grew so disturbed and so perplexed that he actually pushed his spectacles away altogether, and ruffled his thin grey locks into almost comical disorder. Then he went out into the garden to find Mavis.

The sound of voices struck on his ear and led him in their direction. He saw his daughter standing by the gate and talking to her friend, Alice Kirkman, who apparently had just paid a morning visit.

"Well, good-bye, dear," she was saying. "I thought I would just run over and tell you, as you were such friends. We are all so pleased; it is such a good thing for Trevor. I daresay he will leave the army now, and settle down in England, and go into Parliament, and all that, you know. I suppose I may give your congratulations when I write."

"Most certainly. I wish him all the happiness he expects."

Was that Mavis's voice? The old man stopped and wondered. What was the change in it? Where was its sweet, glad ring? Never before had the girlish tones known that cold, sharp defiance.

He waited under the blossoming hawthorn tree, and presently he saw her turn and come towards him.

She saw him, and made an effort to smile, but her eyes looked strained and hard, and the smile died, and left the girlish face all blank and cold.

"Mavis," he said, "my child, what is it?"

She came close to him then, and laid her pretty golden hand against his breast, seeming to find some comfort in the company and sense of his presence.

"Oh, papa," she said, "I have been very foolish—but I was young, was I not? And it seemed so easy to believe, and I have always wanted to be happy, and it seemed so easy when he was here; and now it is all over, papa, all over."

"My child!" he said gently. "My poor little child! It is too soon for you to learn the bitterness of life."

"Perhaps it will do me good," she said. "I was so vain, you know, and I did not care much for paining others, as long as I amused myself, and now someone else has amused himself, and I—I have the pain."

The little catch in her breath, that was so nearly a sob, hurt his heart as nothing had hurt it since she was a little child weeping in his arms for the mother who was dead. He held her closer, and tenderly stroked the bright hair flooding his breast.

"I belong only to you now, papa," she went on presently. "I will be good to you and not neglect you so much. I have never been a good daughter, yet——"

"Yes, dear," he interposed tenderly, "the best of daughters. You had no faults but the faults of youth."

She was silent for a moment or two, battling with tears that longed to rise. Her pride was deeply hurt. She had been waiting, hoping, trusting, for so long, and now the only explanation of Trevor Gordon's conduct had come to her in the announcement of his marriage.

Her father did not speak. He was wise enough to leave her to herself; but presently she noticed the letter in his hand, and asked him what it was.

He took her hand then and put it within his arm.

"I think," he said presently, "if you

would not mind walking up and down the lawn with me for a few moments, I could tell you the story better. It will interest you, I am sure."

She lifted her head. Her eyes lost something of their dull, hard look.

"Is it about—Mr. Strahan?" she asked.

"Yes," he said; and in a few quiet, earnest sentences told her that story of self-sacrifice.

She listened in silence.

"It was very noble," she said, "if—the motive was disinterested. I don't know whether one ought to accept men's actions in the light they represent them."

The Professor looked at her somewhat sadly.

"You have learnt your lesson," he said; "but you must not apply it indiscriminately. Sebastian Strahan is a very brave and very generous man."

"No doubt," she said, with a little sigh. "But I wonder he took so much trouble about mere—money."

"It was your money," said her father. "I told him that I thought your happiness depended on it."

"Papa!" she cried, and stopped there on the smooth, green grass and looked at him with flashing eyes, while a flush, hot as flame, swept all the white rose pallor of her cheek. "You told him that?"

"Why are you angry?" asked the Professor, puzzled and sorely disturbed by so sudden a change of mood. "I knew Captain Gordon could not marry unless his wife had money. He thought once you had a fortune, and when he knew it was lost—"

"Oh, hush!" she cried fiercely, and covered her face with her hands to hide the scorch of shame. "Do not speak of him. I see it all now. Oh, how could I ever have been so weak, so vain!"

The Professor drew down his spectacles and surveyed her with renewed anxiety. He had wanted to comfort her, and he was afraid he had only hurt her more. Presently her hands dropped; she looked up at the grieved and kindly face.

"We will not speak of—him again," she said calmly; "he has forgotten so easily. Surely I can do the same. It is a great help to know one's folly for what it is. Love is a false thing; there is bound to be an end to it some day."

"Not all love," he said gently. "Do not confound instances with exceptions."

"You must be my exception," she said, with a little mirthless smile; "for henceforth I will only love you."

"I shall be quite content," he said, "for a year or so. No doubt there is a true lover waiting somewhere in the world, and you may yet find consolation for a wound that has hurt your pride, I think, more than your heart."

The months drifted into years. Again the seasons changed. Again the "reign of the roses" made sweet and radiant all the quaint old garden ways. Again Mavis Wynne walked to and fro among the gold and crimson blossoms, and remembered the evening three years before when she had stood there with Sebastian Strahan.

Three years; was it really three years! And now she was rich and her own mistress, and life—from a dream—had become a busy and important thing to her. Her nature had awakened suddenly—awakened by one sharp stroke of sorrow. But the sorrow had been needful and beneficial, and the wound had healed; and to-night she was wondering with a little thrill of expectation, how her father's friend would greet her, and in what manner she could best thank him for all he had done for her.

"I hope he will come," she was saying, as she moved to and fro among the aisles of roses. "It is a long time since he wrote, but he fixed the date; and it seems so nice to have fixed it on the very anniversary of his departure. To think it should be three years! He will be quite old now. I suppose I shall have two elderly gentlemen to tend, and look after. Well, after all, I am not sure that they are not nicer than young ones. They seem more trustworthy, at all events!"

She gathered a spray of creamy roses and held them to her face. "How their scent brings back that night!" she thought. "I remember he stood just here, and how sad he was looking, and he gave me just such roses, and said they were like my skin; and to think I laughed, and jested, and called him mercenary, when after all it was for my sake he was going out to that horrid place—my sake; and I was such a thoughtless, frivolous little wretch!"

She paused abruptly. A strange chill wind, brief as a sigh and scarcely more audible, touched her cheek, and an odd thrill—half terror, half expectation—seemed to touch her heart. Involuntarily she looked round; she could not have said why she felt that someone was near her and beside her, and yet—she was quite alone. With an effort she threw off that strange chill of fear, and turned towards the house.

Half-way there she saw her father coming to meet her. Something in his face told her of a sudden shock or grief that must have struck home to his kindly heart. She stopped and stood still—waiting.

"Something has happened," she said involuntarily. "Mr. Strahan cannot come to-night?"

"It is terrible," the Professor said, in a helpless, broken way. "My poor friend! The noblest, kindest heart that ever beat!"

"He is not—dead," she faltered. "Oh, papa, not—that!"

"The settlement was surprised by Indians," he said. "It must have happened that very night he wrote his last letter, fixing the date of his arrival here. They were outnumbered six to one, and he—poor Sebastian—was killed. There is the paper on the library table—his name heads the list."

She turned very pale, and her eyes filled with tears.

"And it was for my sake he went," she said slowly. "For my sake!"

The roses dropped from her hand; their scent seemed to sicken her. "And I called him mercenary," she went on, with a pathetic break in her voice that drew her father's eyes to her face in sudden wonder. "And he will never know how sorry I am—how sorry I am!"

IN GLITTER OR IN GOLD.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

Author of "Lady Lovelace," "Judith Wynne," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I. A MIDSUMMER DAY.

"I LOVE my love with a 'B,' because she is beautiful," said Hubert Lee, in low, one might almost say in nervous, tones.

There was no one within earshot, save a young damsel who was seated a little higher than he on the bank of the stream on which he half reclined; so the words might be reasonably supposed to be addressed to her.

Assuredly, if she were his love, he did well to call her beautiful. No other adjective could describe hair golden as sunlight; eyes "deeply, darkly, dangerously blue;" a complexion as soft in its colouring as the inside of a cameo shell; and a figure lithe and graceful as the willow wands which swayed hither and thither in the light summer breeze.

She, however, made no sign of having heard his words, but continued silently, in

leisurely fashion, to pluck every forget-me-not within reach of her hand, making them into posies, and tying them with blades of the long grasses which grew beside the stream.

Hubert had no mind to "take silence as an answer."

"One way or another, I'll be out of my misery to-day," he said to himself. "This playing at fast and loose is getting beyond endurance."

So he raised himself on one elbow, lifted his voice a little, his eyes still more, and said the words over again; this time in a tone that insisted on an answer.

The girl looked up for a moment.

"Ah, how strange!" she said demurely. "'I love my love with a 'B,' too, but not because he is beautiful.'"

Then her eyes drooped over her forget-me-nots again.

Hubert's face fell, for he, too, had undoubted right to claim tribute for his good looks and straight figure.

"You object to good looks?" he asked, plucking viciously at the tufts of grass and poor little daisies.

Instead of answering his question, the young lady lifted up a warning finger.

"Listen," she said, "how loud the waterfall is to-day! Surely you can hear it?"

Now as the only piece of water that could be, by any exaggeration of epithet, dignified with the name of waterfall, was exactly two miles distant, and at its best was only the stream beside which they sat trickling at its source over the mountain-pass, it was scarcely matter for surprise that Hubert had persistently declared throughout the whole of that day that the waterfall was in the young lady's ears and nowhere else. He made an impatient movement.

"May I ask what adjective your letter 'B' represents?" he asked, bringing back the talk with a jerk to their former topic.

"I didn't say it represented an adjective."

"Do you mean to say it represents a noun and that noun is book-worm? You may as well finish your sentence while you are about it and say, 'His name is Baldwin, and he is an unutterable Bore.'"

Since the young lady before him owned to an elderly cousin with literary tastes, whose name was Baldwin, and who had made no disguise of the fact that he was over head and ears in love with her, it must be admitted that the allusion was not in the best of taste.

But then it is well known that hot temper frequently puts good taste under a bushel.

The girl tossed her head slightly.

"Something else besides Baldwin begins with a 'B,' and that is Bad temper," she said significantly.

"And something else begins with a 'C' beside Christabelle, and that is Coquette," he retorted angrily.

Here was a second offence against good taste, for this young lady, in addition to the prosaic name of Armstrong, owned to the poetic one of Christabelle.

Then there fell a moment's silence. A wild bird flew from out the water-reeds; a light breeze swept past bringing with it the scent of hay from distant meadows. It was no wonder that these two had sought refuge here, among the shadowy willows, from the scorching heat of a typical midsummer day. It was an altogether ideal retreat; the very place one would think in which to say soft words, to exchange soft glances, vows, and golden rings. Blue mountains skirted the landscape on one side; on the other a dark, tangly wood of ancient growth shut them in. Between, lay this green stretch of park-like meadow, with its narrow rippling stream—a streak of living silver flashing now into light, now into dark, at the will of the skimming clouds or glowing blue sky overhead.

Christabelle was the first to break the silence. She gathered together her forget-me-nots and called to her dog, a snow-white Pomeranian, who was having just then a fine game among the daisies and buttercups.

"Come, Fritz! Fritz!" she called, "bring me my basket, we'll go in now, it's tea and biscuit time."

But to Hubert, she did not give so much as a side-glance.

Fritz had never been trained in the paths of obedience; he had moreover scented a mole underground, and as mole-hunting in his opinion stood second only to biscuit-stealing, he showed not the slightest disposition to attend to his mistress's order, but attacked the mole-hill vigorously with nose and paws.

Both the dog and the flower-basket were within reach of Hubert's arm, so he collared the little animal, and put the basket between his teeth. Then one more effort he felt he must make to get his fate decided one way or another that summer's afternoon.

"Take the basket to your mistress,

Fritz," he said, now in a very humble and penitential tone, "and ask her how she can be so persistently cruel to me!"

Christabelle, in her heart, delighted in these transitions from anger to penitence, in which Hubert was in the habit of indulging daily under her uncertain discipline. She did not, however, intend to give him his pardon at present, it would involve too much. So she patted her dog, and took the basket from him. "Go back to the gentleman, Fritz," she said, "and ask him how he can make himself so persistently ridiculous?"

The word "ridiculous," put penitence to flight at once. Hubert jumped to his feet, his face very white. Things were evidently at a climax with him now.

"Do you mean to say," he cried hotly, "that you think my love for you is a thing to be called ridiculous? Is it ridiculous for a man to love a woman with all his heart, and soul, and strength; to put on one side every pursuit in life to win her love; and to be ready at any moment to lay down his life to gratify her slightest whim?"

Christabelle was unprepared for such an outburst. Also she did not like the word "whim" used in this connection. She knew that she was full of faults—but whims! she was positive she had none. It was implying that she was nothing better than a spoilt child, not knowing what she wanted from one hour to another. So she opened her white sunshade, tilted her sun-bonnet lower, and called to Fritz again.

"Come, Fritz, biscuits and tea—they are the nicest things in the world at five o'clock in the afternoon."

But Hubert was no longer to be trifled with; affairs with him had reached a crisis, and, one way or another, must be brought to an ending.

Three paces took him to the girl's side. He laid his hand upon her arm.

"Christabelle," he said, and his voice showed how much in earnest he was. "A 'yes' or a 'no,' will tell me all I want to know. If my devotion to you for years past—years, mind—has only served to make me ridiculous in your eyes, tell me so at once and believe me you shall never be troubled with it again."

Christabelle did not like his imperious tone. For one thing she was unaccustomed to it. Her lovers—himself included—had always hitherto been models of humility and patience.

She lost her temper also.

"Whatever you may have been in years past, I think you are utterly, utterly, utterly ridiculous now." And so saying, she shook her arm free from his hand, turned sharply away, and took the path which led out of the meadow.

Hubert stood for a moment watching her, the glow of anger rapidly fading from his face.

"It is best it should end now," he said to himself. "She evidently doesn't care a brass button for me. I'll see her uncle at once, and tell him I've had my dismissal at last."

There were two paths out of the meadow. Christabelle had chosen the more circuitous one which led through the flower-garden up to the house. Hubert picked up his hat and took a shorter way, giving just one farewell look to the girl who had come to a halt at the garden gate.

Hubert out of sight, her good temper came back to her; but it wouldn't do, she decided, to let him know it and forgive him all in a minute. "I won't go in and pour out tea for him," she said to herself, "because of course he'd beg my pardon, and I should have to say something; and really I've not quite made up my mind what that something will be."

From this garden gate there was to be had a good view of the old Welsh mansion, which Uncle Simon, Christabelle's bachelor uncle and her sole guardian, had hired for a summer's holiday. It was a house of goodly proportions, and owned to a fair amount of garden, meadow, and wood. It had once been a border stronghold, held by the noble house of Glendwr, but successive generations, with changing requirements, had considerably modified its frontage, and the east wall with its five-sided bastion, was the only part of the original structure left intact. Christabelle had chosen to have her bed-room in this ancient corner of the house because, she declared—though nobody could be found to verify her statement—in the still summer night, when blackbird and thrush were hushed, she could hear the little stream tumbling and splashing, a miniature waterfall, among the mountains.

A step on the garden path made her look round again.

"Miss Chrissie, Miss Chrissie," called a peremptory voice with a North-country accent. The figure of a neat, elderly maid followed the voice adown the path.

This was Ruth, who had been maid to Chrissie's mother up to the day of her

death, now about a dozen years ago, and who subsequently, as nurse to the young lady, had joined her efforts to Uncle Simon's to pet and indulge her to the top of her bent. Now, somewhat late in the day, this good woman—also conjointly with Uncle Simon—was doing her utmost to undo her successful work of past years.

"Miss Chrissie, are you coming in to pour out the tea? The master wishes to know when he is to get any," asked Ruth, as her last step brought her to Chrissie's side.

Chrissie knew this was a fabrication on Ruth's part, for Uncle Simon had as great a horror of the rattle of tea-cups as he had of the dinner-gong, or anything else that disturbed him from his beloved ornithological studies.

"Go in and tell Uncle Simon I think it's much too hot to drink tea this afternoon, and a glass of cold water will do him more good," said Chrissie calmly.

Ruth's next words showed on what her thoughts were bent.

"Isn't Mr. Lee to have any tea either?" she asked. "Miss Chrissie, I met him going up to the house as I came down, and—and—he didn't look himself at all."

"Didn't he? Perhaps the hot weather upsets him as it does some other people."

Ruth looked at her steadily for about twenty seconds, then she seemed to have taken in "the whole situation" to her entire satisfaction.

"Miss Chrissie," she said solemnly, "he's the fourth this year."

"Fourth, fourth!" and Chrissie flushed a bright scarlet, and began playing with the posies in her basket; "I don't know what you mean."

"Why, there was Mr. McAlpine who was number one; and Captain Crichton number two; and your cousin Mr. Baldwin number three—"

"Ruth, what are you thinking about to speak to me in this way?"

"Your happiness, Miss Chrissie, that's what I'm thinking about!" said the voluble Ruth. "It's more than I can bear to see you throwing away all your chances one after the other. I did think when the master asked Mr. Lee to come down and help him shoot his strange birds, or stuff them, or something or other, that everything would be all right. I said to myself, Miss Chrissie won't say 'no' to such a nice young gentleman as that; handsome, rich, everything that a gentleman ought to be."

"No, no, no!" interrupted Chrissie vigorously; "he has a very bad temper."

"Miss Chrissie, there's never a woof without a flaw in it, let the cotton be never so fine! And there's another saying up in the North," this added with a pointed significance, "'many buyers make a bad market,' which, if you don't understand, Miss Chrissie, let me tell you means that when the buyers are many the sellers are apt to put too high a price on their goods, and end with never getting rid of them at all."

Ruth was a Manchester woman, "born and bred," as she was fond of phrasing it at times, by way of clinching an argument. She had a keen eye for a bargain, and it was an offence to her common sense to see her young lady so ruthlessly refusing to make her hay when the sun was shining.

Underlying this feeling was another and a tenderer one. Here was the master getting on in life, and she herself—well, "not so young as she was." What would become of Miss Chrissie left alone in the world, with no one to look after her? It had hitherto taken the combined efforts of two to keep her out of mischief; left free to follow her own devices, what might not be the result?

Ruth brought her scolding to an end with a look on her face which seemed to say "there, Miss Chrissie, whatever comes of it I've done my duty, and spoken the truth to you." She fully expected a tremendous outburst from Miss Chrissie by way of acknowledgement for her plain speaking.

But Chrissie, for some reason or other, seemed bent on exercising an unusual amount of self-control that morning. "Well, Ruth," she said calmly, "I suppose you've said every word you had to say—I should think you had, at any rate—and can stand still a minute and listen to me, for I've something to say."

"No doubt you have, Miss Chrissie."

"I've something in my head I wish to do, and I want you to help me to do it!"

Ruth drew a long breath and said nothing. But to Chrissie's fancy an extra amount of starch seemed suddenly to show itself in her muslin cap and linen collar. Chrissie went on bravely enough, notwithstanding.

"It's just this: when we leave Wales I don't want to go back into Lancashire, but I want to go right away to London for a

whole year, and see everything that is to be seen, and go to all the theatres, and all the balls I can get invitations for!"

"Heaven bless us, Miss Chrissie! what next?" ejaculated Ruth.

"Well, what would happen next would be altogether according to circumstances. If in the year's time I saw no one I liked better—and I don't suppose I should see any one I liked better—I might, but I only say I might—go back home and marry Hubert Lee—"

"Bless my heart, Miss Chrissie, do you suppose the gentleman is like your Fritz there, to be sent off when you don't want him, and whistled back when you do?"

Chrissie laughed lightly.

"Leave that to me! All I want you to do is, by-and-by, when I go to Uncle Simon and say, 'I want to go to town for a whole year,' to take the first opportunity of getting him alone and telling him that, of course, it's only natural and right that a young lady at my time of life should wish to see the world and have a little fun. Why, it's three whole years since last I went to town."

"And what will the master do in London with no birds to catch and nothing to occupy him from morning till night?" grumbled the old servant. But her very tone of voice showed that she was yielding her ground, though it might be inch by inch.

"Oh, he could study the birds in the Zoological Gardens, or the Crystal Palace—I think they have some cockatoos there. Then, too, there is sure to be a splendid collection of ornithological books at the British Museum; he could strain his eyes over them from morning till night if he liked. And don't you see, Ruth"—and here Chrissie's voice grew irresistibly coaxing—"I let Uncle Simon take this funny old house in this lonely part of Wales just because he had heard that some wonderful tomtits had made their appearance here, so the very least he can do in return will be to let me choose our next holiday trip; otherwise, I am quite sure I shall fall into a succession of fits of bad temper, and you know what that means."

Ruth pursed up her lips, and said nothing. She was tall, and prim, and stern-looking, and might have sat as a model for a typical Puritan. But, for all that, there was a very tender corner in her heart for her young mistress. And the young mistress knew this, and felt convinced that by-and-by when she fell to crying for the new moon,

Ruth would be the first to mount the ladder to get her darling her heart's desire.

Meantime Hubert, in hot haste, as one afraid to let his courage cool, had made his way to Uncle Simon's study, where he knew he would find the old gentleman among his birds and books.

An odd commingling of odours, as of dried birds' nests, stuffy feathers, and camphor, saluted him as he turned the handle and went in.

It was a small square room, but scantily supplied with furniture, and possibly for that reason had been selected by Uncle Simon for the "den," in which to pursue his studies in natural history. The materials for these studies lay scattered on every side. The window seat was covered with birds' nests in various stages of dilapidation; strings of eggs adorned the backs of the chairs; and a beautiful jay, with an ugly red stain on its blue wing, lay on the floor.

At a table near the window sat the old gentleman, with a big volume before him. He was very tall, very erect, and so thin that it seemed as if his own bones must hurt him. His eyes were sunken, his forehead prominent, his skin sallow. Strangers introduced to him would look and look again, wondering where they had seen his face before; but it was not until he removed the black velvet skull-cap, which he generally wore in doors and out, and displayed a bald head with one lock in front, that the resemblance to old Father Time would make itself apparent, and they would then discover that only the emblematical scythe and hour-glass were needed to make the picture complete.

He was muttering to himself and shaking his head over his book as Hubert entered.

"If, instead of making a fine poem out of the story, they had given a few details as to the species of the birds, they would have served posterity far better," he was saying.

Then he looked up and saw Hubert standing in front of him.

"It's the story of Rhiannon's birds I'm hunting down," he went on. "It's an old legend that, in different forms, is told all over Wales. You know it, I dare say: how that the warriors who came to see Rhiannon and heard her birds sing were spell-bound for eighty——"

But Hubert was in no mood to listen to the story of Rhiannon's birds.

"I've come to say good-bye," he began.

"Years," went on the old gentleman, not heeding the interruption. "Well, now the great point is, what birds were they? One version of the story gives them as linnets, another as thrushes, another as——"

"I've come to——" again began Hubert, holding out his hand.

But the old gentleman's eyes had wandered once more to his book, and he did not see the outstretched hand.

"Blackbirds," he continued. "My own belief is that they were crested tits, and that the crested tit was at one time a native of Great Britain. Now it is well known that these tits imitate the notes——"

"Confound the crested tits," muttered Hubert. Then he went up to Uncle Simon and said right into his ear: "I'm off at once, Mr. Armstrong. I want to save the night-mail from Gorsaf-y-Coed, and I want to say good-bye."

Uncle Simon looked bewildered.

"Going!" he said. "I don't understand. Does Chrissie know? What does she say?"

Hubert gave a short laugh.

"What can she have to say!" he exclaimed bitterly. "It doesn't matter two-pence-halfpenny to her what I do. I never had any chance with her—I see it all now, and I ought to be very much obliged to her for speaking the truth to me at last."

Uncle Simon began to get a misty idea of the state of affairs. He rose from his chair, and laid his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

"Now," he said kindly, "I'm sure there's some mistake. You're in too great a hurry to take things for granted. You should have patience."

"Have patience!"

"Yes, have patience. Now, if you remember when I asked you to come here and help me hunt down the crested tits—by the way, I heard only this morning that a whole lot of them had been seen in the wood at the end of the meadow. Now that confirms my idea of Rhiannon's birds being——"

But Hubert felt that, if they got upon the topic of Rhiannon's birds again, his good-bye would never be said.

"I must be off at once. I shall walk down to the station. If you will have my portmanteau packed and sent after me to the 'Grosvenor,' I shall be very much obliged to you," he said.

"Now, now, don't be in such a hurry.

What was I saying?—oh!—I asked you down for a month or three weeks, thinking you'd take matters quietly, not rush at them in a hot-headed fashion; and now, before you've been here a week, you tell me it's all over between you and Chrissie, and you must go! A week isn't long enough to settle so momentous a matter in."

"A week! You forget how long we've known each other. Why, four years ago Chrissie knew how much I cared for her, and gave me reason to think she really liked me."

"Four years ago! bless my soul! The child was only fifteen then. I had no idea young women began so early to take an interest in such things," ejaculated Uncle Simon in mild astonishment.

Hubert held out his hand again. "Good-bye, Mr. Armstrong," he said, "and thank you for all your kindness to me."

But Uncle Simon did not put out his. "My dear boy, think it over! Ten to one you did not understand what Chrissie meant—" he began.

"Didn't understand! When a girl tells you right out that she thinks you've been making an utter fool of yourself in trying to win her love, I suppose there's only one way of understanding her words," Hubert cried, freely translating the language of coquetry into that of plain prose.

Uncle Simon's face fell.

"Well, that was rather rough on you, I admit! but—but you mustn't take it too much to heart. And I do hope," this added a little apprehensively, "your father won't let this little affair between you and Chrissie make any difference in our thirty years' friendship."

"You may be quite sure I shall take all blame on my own shoulders."

"Now, there are the McAlpines," Uncle Simon went on, "generations back, I might say, our fathers and mothers were fast friends. And the valuable specimens of migratory birds they used to send me from their place in the Highlands. But I never hear from one of them now; and there's Captain Crichton too; and my cousin Baldwin—"

Like flame to tinder, was this unlucky allusion to the elderly Baldwin.

"I don't think you need break your heart about him," cried Hubert hotly. "Take my word for it, he stands a very good chance with Chrissie, if he has the pluck to come and ask her again."

"Really! if I thought that, I would write to him and—"

"Oh, don't act on what I say. If I thought there was any chance of Baldwin coming back here to make love to Chrissie I should stay on, to have the pleasure of breaking every bone in his body."

Uncle Simon began to think it might be as well to "speed the parting guest."

"If you must go, you must," he said with an air of resignation. "Are you going on to town or back to your people in Devon?"

"I shan't go near Devon. I shall travel up to town by the night mail, and to-morrow may find me at Southampton. The Geographical Society is sending out an expedition to the west coast of Africa; a friend of mine joined it six weeks ago and wished me to join it too. Like a fool, I refused. However, there's time enough still if I start off at once!"

"My dear boy—" began Uncle Simon persuasively.

"No use, Mr. Armstrong—" interrupted Hubert, thinking that more remonstrances were coming and answering them in anticipation. "No, I won't stay dinner, thank you. No, I won't let you drive me down to Gorsaf-y-Coed. My legs will take me there just as quickly as your horses could. Good-bye." His last word carried him out of the room.

"Hubert, Hubert!" called Uncle Simon after him.

Hubert came back a step.

"What part of Africa is your expedition bound for?"

"Upon my word I don't know, and don't care. Tan-Yan, something or other, I think they called the place."

Uncle Simon thought for a moment. "I was reading in the Geographical Society's notes the other day that the tufted tit-mind—that's not the crested tit I was speaking about a moment ago—had been seen at some place on the west coast. Now I am very anxious, as you know, to make an exhaustive enquiry into the whole family of tits, their haunts, habits, migrations, and I was thinking as you are a good shot—"

"I understand," interrupted Hubert impatiently, "if I come upon any tufted tits, I'll send them home to you in cart-loads—their skins at any rate. Good-bye."

"I'll send you a full description of them to the 'Grosvenor' by to-night's post. And, Hubert—Hubert, one moment."

Hubert paused at the foot of the stairs, looking up at the old gentleman who leaned over the balusters, looking down

on him. "I suppose you'll walk to Gorsaf-y-Coed through the wood here at the end of the meadow."

"Oh yes, it's the shortest way."

"I told you I had heard this morning that the crested tit had been seen in unusual numbers on the skirts of the wood. Now it occurs to me that if you chance to come upon——"

But here Hubert's patience broke its bounds.

"Confound the tits, crested, tufted, the whole lot of them!" he cried angrily, making rapidly for the hall door as he spoke. Uncle Simon's last words reached him on the door-step.

"The crested tit, as I told you, can imitate perfectly the notes of——"

But the young man did not hear the finish of the sentence.

As Hubert departed by the front door, Chrissie, swinging her basket of forget-me-nots and followed by Fritz, was making her way slowly along the garden paths at the back of the house, pausing now and again to gather a rose or heavily-scented carnation. The shadows of the tall sycamores, which shut in the garden on two sides, were beginning to slant downwards towards the house now. From beneath their broad leaves came the flutter of birds awakening from afternoon languor to evening song. The dressing-bell clanged through the house, and simultaneously Ruth made her appearance at the door, as though she were on the look-out for her young mistress.

Chrissie, however, did not hasten her steps. She knew perfectly well that the dinner-bell would clang and clang again before it would succeed in disturbing Uncle Simon from his beloved feathers and eggs.

Ruth advanced to meet her, looking, so Chrissie thought, more grim and sour than ever.

"He's gone, Miss Chrissie, all in a hurry—wouldn't wait even for the carriage to be ordered, or his portmanteau to be packed; that's to follow him to-morrow to his hotel."

"Do you mean Mr. Lee has gone?" asked Chrissie indifferently. "Well, what if he has; he'll be sure to come back again."

"That's as may be!"

Chrissie laughed lightly. "Don't you remember at Christmas time he started off in just such a hurry, because I wouldn't promise to give him more than two waltzes at the county ball, got as far as Chester

and came back the next day promising he'd never do such a thing again."

"He's going a little farther than to Chester this time, Miss Chrissie; he's off to Africa, or will be in a day or two."

"To Africa!" and Chrissie stood still in the middle of the path, all her smiles gone together with the roses of her cheeks.

"A telegram would find him and bring him back, Miss Chrissie," suggested the old servant, her grimness vanishing in a moment before Chrissie's evident distress.

"And what should I say to him if he came back?" said Chrissie thoughtfully.

"Oh, that's best known to yourself, miss," said Ruth tartly again. "It's not for me to say what a young lady is to say to a young gentleman she cares for."

"Who said I cared for him?" said Chrissie as sharply as Ruth herself had spoken. "I've not made up my mind by a long way whether I will care for him, or won't care for him. How tiresome you are to-day, Ruth! you do nothing but worry me. Why don't you go in and leave me alone?"

"It's time to dress for dinner, Miss Chrissie."

"I'm not going to dress for dinner, and I shall not sit down to dinner to-night. Tell Uncle Simon I've a headache, and am going to my own room to lie down."

Chrissie was certainly in as bad a temper as Ruth had ever seen her in.

CHAPTER II. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

MATTERS were no better when, about a couple of hours later, the old servant, with a tray of light provisions in her hand, made her way up to her young lady's room.

She found her seated at the open window, with eyes very red and cheeks very pale.

This window in the bastion of the oldest part of the house had been enlarged from its original slit-like proportions, and commanded a grand view of the distant mountains; of the stretch of park-like meadow through which the little stream ran; and of the dark, tangly wood which bounded it. The silence and greyness of early night were beginning to fall upon the landscape now. The mountains were melting into the clouds which crowned them; the green meadows showed grey; the wood loomed black through the soft, whitish vapour, which, rising from the stream, was slowly spreading itself in all directions. The air

was freshening, and a gentle breeze, heavily-laden with summer scents, rippled into the room through the open window.

Ruth stood looking at the young girl, with her tray in her hand. Her heart ached for her nursing.

"Miss Chrissie," she said gently, "a telegram would bring him back, take my word for it."

But Chrissie would not let the old servant so much as open her mouth.

"Who told you I wanted him back?" she said sharply. "And why have you come to worry me? Did I not say that no one was to come near me till I rang?" Then, to prevent further talk, she rose from her chair and leaned out of the window, turning her back upon Ruth.

Ruth thought for a moment. Miss Chrissie must have been fonder than she imagined of the departed lover. Things must be mended somehow or other, and the young lady made to listen to reason. Of course she could see, plainly enough, that Miss Chrissie was in a frame of mind to which neither scoldings nor entreaties could make appeal. Her thoughts flew back to the old nursery days—not so very distant after all—when the wilful young damsel had had to be "brought round" in a variety of ways, by various devices.

One device Ruth had generally found to operate very successfully. The retailing of some little item of news or gossip; or, in a very bad state of affairs, the sudden invention of a good story rarely failed to divert the young lady's thoughts from the cause of dissatisfaction, and render her in a few minutes thoroughly penitent and amenable to reason.

"She'd go from screaming to listening all in a moment, I remember, if I only said 'once upon a time.' My word, how I used to rack my brains to know what was to follow the 'once upon a time.'" said the maid to herself.

So she fetched a small table, and putting her tray upon it beside her young mistress, began to gossip pleasantly.

"Miss Chrissie," she said, "the old woman from the farm in the valley came up with eggs this afternoon, and she talked—my goodness she did talk——"

"So do other people who don't come up from the farm in the valley with eggs," interrupted Chrissie, turning her head sharply round for a moment.

Ruth was too diplomatic to notice the insinuation; she went on with steady determination. "And she did say there

were queer stories about this old house, and certain reasons why the Glendwys always let it and went away at this time of the year."

"Their reasons can concern no one but themselves," said Chrissie more crossly than ever, and without turning her head.

Ruth grew desperate. "I shall be sent out of the room in another minute," she thought. Then she went on speaking very rapidly. "And she asked who slept in this old corner of the house——"

Chrissie turned and faced her.

"I do wish——" she began.

"Oh and she told such an odd story, Miss Chrissie, of what went on here ever so many hundred years ago."

"You'd go out of——" continued Chrissie.

"She said, Miss Chrissie," went on Ruth breathlessly now, "that once upon a time, Miss Chrissie, once upon a time there lived far away among those mountains an old harper—oh, I forget what she called him—Telyuiwr, I think, or something like it."

Chrissie did not finish her sentence.

Ruth took a breath and went on. "His beard was white and down to his knees; and he was so old, no one could remember when he was born nor who was his father. No one knew exactly where he lived, for he used to wander about from place to place carrying his harp with him. Now this harp was made of gold——"

"Made of gold!"

Chrissie was all attention now, she had left her place at the window, and had re-seated herself, folding her hands in her lap and leaning back in her chair.

"Yes, made of gold, Miss Chrissie, and wonderful music the old man got out of it if the story is true. Sometimes he would play only on one string, sometimes on two, but the grandest music of all was when he used to sweep his hand across all the strings playing on every string in turn."

"On every string in turn," repeated Chrissie dreamily.

"People were always begging him to come and play to them. Sick people, they said, forgot their pain as they listened to him; poor people forgot their poverty; dying people even forgot all about death, and talked as if they were going to begin life instead of to end it. But the odd part of it all was that when they used to beg the old harper to come to a wedding, or a feast, or a funeral, he would always strike a bargain and say, 'Remember I must be paid in gold.'"

"Paid in gold!" echoed Chrissie again.

"And although the people were ever so poor, they always managed to find a gold piece for the old man. And, stranger still, it is said they never missed that gold piece; one way or another it was always more than repaid to them. Naturally enough the old harper's fame spread far and wide, and the Glendwr, a cruel, ruthless chieftain, who held this old house as a border stronghold, wishing to hear his music, made a great feast on a certain Midsummer Day, and sent his retainers to summon him to the castle. 'Remember your master must pay me in gold,' said the old man as he shouldered his harp and followed the servants. When he arrived at the castle he found a great crowd of retainers and serving men and women assembled on the green sward—just below this window, Miss Chrissie—and the chieftain and his wife and daughters sat up here where you and I are sitting now. The old man swept his hands across the strings and a great silence fell on the people. Then when he began to play, all the people listened as they had never in their lives listened before. The young and light-hearted felt younger and lighter in heart than ever, and said the music was like the sound of one of the mountain waterfalls.

Here Chrissie gave a start, but she said nothing.

"But the old and the sad said the sound to them was like the echo from out the mountains. One and all declared the music was the saddest and the merriest, the sweetest yet the most solemn, that they had ever heard. Some said it was a new and unknown tune; others said it was so old that their mothers must have sung it to them as they lay in their cradles. The chieftain, who sat in this window, was the only one who was dissatisfied. He declared the harp was out of tune, that it twanged and gave out false notes. 'How now, my lady,' he said to his wife who sat beside him, 'are we to pay for such strumming as this with pieces of gold?' Then he called to his servants and desired them to bring him some new glittering brass pieces which he had in the house, and he tossed them from the window to the harper. 'There, old man,' he said, 'I've paid you in glitter if not in gold.'"

"In glitter if not in gold," repeated Chrissie, thoughtfully.

"But the old man did not touch the brass pieces. He shouldered his harp once more, and stood beneath the window, turning his face upwards towards the chieftain.

'Look well on my face,' he said, 'you will see it no more again for ever.' Now the story goes on to say that though the old man was never again seen on this side of the mountains, his music was sometimes heard, and that never a Midsummer Day passes but what some one hears it in the still summer-night. Those who have a clear conscience and have paid their debts honourably—like you and me, Miss Chrissie—never feel troubled by it; but woe to those who owe their neighbours anything! They simply can't stand it, it compels them there and then to go and pay what they owe. Ah, possibly the Glendwr, who owns this house now, is a wise man to keep out of it, being, as people say, not particularly burdened with money or honesty either. There, Miss Chrissie, I've told you the story, as nearly as possible as the old woman told it to me, of the old harper who didn't get paid for his music. What do you think of it?"

But Chrissie, for some reason or other, did not seem inclined to discuss with Ruth the story of the old harper, "who didn't get paid for his music." She leaned back in her chair, covering her eyes with one hand. The words, "Look well on my face, you will see it no more again for ever," seemed to have a special and a solemn meaning in them, a meaning which she could "all but," yet not quite catch.

Then all in a flash as though it were suddenly whispered into her ear it came to her how that she had been listening not alone to the story of Telyuiwr, but to that wonderful story, ever old yet ever new, of Love, the eternal harpist on the golden harp.

Ruth did not like her silence. Naturally enough she misinterpreted it.

"A telegram would find him, Miss Chrissie," she began, a little doubtfully.

"Go away now, Ruth, I want to think," said Chrissie, but not in the tone in which she had bidden Ruth depart earlier in the evening.

"It's getting late, Miss Chrissie, won't you go to bed?"

"Yes, presently; but go away now, I want to think," and again Chrissie leaned back in her chair, covering her face with her hands.

But somehow thoughts would not come. Her eyes ached with the tears she had shed, her head ached, too, as though over-weighted with thoughts that were there, yet could not shape themselves.

How still the outside night was! Even

the summer breeze seemed to have fallen asleep, not a leaf stirred, not an insect whirled, not a night-bird flapped its wing. Yet what was that distant, splashing noise, now high, now low, now near, now far? Surely it was the waterfall among the mountains! What nonsense it was for people to say there was not a cascade within two and a half miles! If that was not the tumble, and rush, and swirl, of a running stream over high rocks, she did not know what it was.

And with the noise of the falling water growing loud and louder in her ears, Chrissie's hands fell limply to her side, and slowly, softly, a sweet sleep fell upon her.

Could it be fancy?

It seemed to be blown into the room through the half-open window—a weird, wild rush and crescendo of chords. Chrissie stirred in her sleep as though a breeze had swept over her face. Dreams began to trouble her. She thought that, as she sat in her chair beside the window, the sounds of music from a harp came up from the green sward beneath. She thought that she looked down from the casement expecting to see the long white beard and golden harp of Telyuwr; but lo! instead, though the golden harp was there, the harpist was none other than Uncle Simon. His long, bony fingers twanged away, and wonderful notes came springing from beneath them, although, strange to say, he was only playing on one string. They were notes, too, that had words as well as music in them, for they seemed to say: "I've been a father to you, Chrissie, and given you all the happiness you have ever known in the years gone by. Pay me in gold, pay me in gold."

Chrissie, in her dream, felt for her purse as though it were quite an every-day event for Uncle Simon to be there playing on the harp and asking for payment. But when she opened her purse, with a great surprise, she saw that gold she had none, nothing but glittering brass pieces remained to her. And as she stood debating in her own mind whether she should offer Uncle Simon these, the tune beneath the window suddenly changed, and looking down once more, she saw that prim old Ruth had taken Uncle Simon's place, and was there twanging away on another string: "I've been a mother to you and tended you as my own child," the "song without words" seemed to say now: "Pay your debts, Miss Chrissie, pay them in gold."

Chrissie felt the tears rush into her eyes

—even in her sleep she could feel them—for gold she knew she had not to give.

For a moment she could see nothing, hear nothing. Then on a sudden there came a wonderful rush of full-toned harmony, and she knew that the player, whoever he was, now was sweeping all the strings in turn one after the other. And these were the words the music brought with it: "Is it ridiculous for a man to love a woman with all his heart and soul and strength? Look well upon my face, Chrissie, for you will see it no more again for ever."

Chrissie, with a start and a bitter cry, awoke and sprang to her feet. Her cheeks were wet with tears, her heart was beating hard and fast. All in haste she went to the still-opened window and leaned out. She would not have been one whit surprised to have seen there on the green sward the golden harp with Hubert himself in place of the ancient harpist, so strong a hold had her vision taken upon her. But nothing but outside darkness met her eye. The night was still as night could be, there was no moon, and the sky was so canopied with cloud that not a star was to be seen. The landscape showed like some spectral land in which the shadows had taken to themselves form and substance, and those things which had form and substance had dissolved into shadows. The distant mountains showed like distant clouds, the nearer clouds like nearer mountains. The stream looked nothing more than a streak of lead-pencil across an expanse of gloom, and the wood she could fancy was a veritable Hades where the shadows were born, whence they stalked grim and gaunt into the outer world, and whither they returned when their work was done.

She felt herself to be in dreamland still, when, as she stood thus staring into this land of shadows, a figure emerged from out the gloom of the wood, and began to take its way slowly and with many a halt across the dark meadow towards the house. "Is it a man or a ghost?" Chrissie asked herself, bending eagerly, breathlessly forward, as something in the outline of the advancing figure recalled the outline of Hubert Lee. But if it were Hubert, what could have sent him back, and why was he limping in this way, as though every step gave him pain?

She did not stay many seconds at the window debating the matter, but struck a light, and made her way down to the hall-door.

Ruth's door opened simultaneously with Chrissie's. She was still dressed and wrapped up in a shawl:

"Miss Chrissie," she said apologetically, "I couldn't make up my mind to go to bed till I had been in to you again, so I just lay down for a while. And oh, Miss Chrissie, such a dream I've had! I think it must have been the wind moaning in the chimney made me dream it. I dreamt I heard a voice singing—yes, Miss Chrissie, it was singing, I know—and I thought it was your dear mother's voice, saying, 'It is you who have made my child what she is, capitious, and wilful, and fickle. Is this your return for the years of kindness I showed you?'" And here Ruth's voice gave way, and something like a sob ended her sentence.

Chrissie was in too great a hurry to get to the hall door to stop to comfort her. She only gave her a passing nod and said, "Perhaps I'm not so bad as that, after all," and then made her way downstairs as fast as possible.

Ruth helped her to unbar the door, and together they stood on the doorstep, peering into the darkness, Chrissie beginning to fear lest the shadowy, limping figure she thought she had seen was nothing but a dream-creature left behind by her vision to haunt her for a while.

A streak of light from beneath the study door showed that Uncle Simon was still up and hard at work at his birds. Possibly the unusual sound of unbarring and unbolting at that hour disturbed him, for he came out of his "den" blinking very hard and rubbing his skull-cap backwards and forwards, very much to the disturbance of his single forelock.

"You there, Chrissie?" he said. "What are you doing? Thought someone was coming up to the front door! My dear, I want to ask you a question: have you been singing about the house to-night? No? Well, I suppose it was only a dream, after all. I must have fallen asleep over my work—I do sometimes, you know—and I heard in my dream a strange noise like ten thousand birds singing at once. I said to myself, 'It is Rhiannon's birds, now I shall see them for myself, and find out whether they are tits or linnets.' On and on the sound came, nearer and nearer; and then, just as I was expecting a rush of crested tits into the room, lo! there came nothing but a crowd of beaks, big brown beaks, with no bodies behind. They all made straight for me. 'Peck

at his eyes,' one seemed to say; 'Tear at his hand,' said another. Then all together, in a chorus, seemed to shout at me, 'We've given you song, and you've paid us in small shot.' Chrissie," here Uncle Simon's voice dropped a little, "it never dawned upon me before that I was such a bloodthirsty individual."

But Uncle Simon's last sentence did not catch Chrissie's ear, for from out the shadows had come the figure her eyes were searching for, and there could be little doubt but that it was the figure of Hubert Lee, and that he was making his way to the house with difficulty and in pain.

It was Chrissie who helped him up the steps, wheeled out a sofa for him, and then brought wine and made him drink it.

Yet not altogether the Chrissie who had earlier in the day coquetted with him beside the stream, or, later on, had let him depart without a word of farewell. Something in her look, in her touch, in her voice, told Hubert of a change that had come over the girl, a change, too, with which he was not disposed to quarrel.

But he did not venture, as yet, to take advantage of it, and told his story in humble, penitential fashion.

"I feel very small, coming back in this way," he said, trying, in spite of the pain he was evidently suffering, to get up a smile. "I suppose it is now four or five hours since I set off to walk to Gorsaf-y-Coed. Before I had got half-way through the wood my anger began to cool, and I felt I had said good-bye to one of my oldest friends," here he looked at Uncle Simon, "in a very sorry fashion. A beautiful bird flew out of a bush and settled in a tree close to me, I think it must have been a crested tit——"

"Ah—h!" This by way of interjection from Uncle Simon.

"From out the tree," Hubert went on, "there came a flood of song, as of a bird singing to the hen on its nest. I thought I'd find out if they were breeding there, let Mr. Armstrong know, and it would be the best apology I could make for my brusque departure. I swung myself into the tree by a low bough, caught at another to swing myself higher, when down I came with a crash——"

"My dear boy, did the nest come down with you?" asked Uncle Simon anxiously; "that would identify the birds at once." Then, sotto voce to himself he added:

"There could be nothing bloodthirsty in picking up a fallen bird's-nest!"

"Ah, that I can't say; for I lost my senses as I fell, and lay unconscious on the ground for I don't know how long. When I came to myself it was pitch-dark, and I was in great pain—I think I've hurt my shoulder, as well as twisted my ankle. But, Chrissie!" here he turned his face towards the girl who stood beside the sofa listening to his story, "you've no idea how noisy that wood is at night. The birds seemed never to cease singing, or perhaps it was the sighing of the wind among the pines that I heard. Anyhow, as I lay on the ground, there seemed to be voices all round me, saying such strange things to me."

Chrissie said nothing; but the thought in her heart was that Telyuiwr had had a very hard night's work indeed.

Hubert misinterpreted her silence. "Don't think," he said in a low, apologetic tone, "that I've come back to do nothing but tease and worry you into marrying me——" here he paused a moment, looking up at her wistfully, "so soon as I get my foot well I'll be off again—that is, if you will tell me to go!" This was put interrogatively.

But still Chrissie said nothing, only her eyes were very downcast, her cheeks rosy red.

Hubert went on even more doubtfully than before. "If I am to go I am, and there is no more to be said; but will you—as a great favour I ask it—mind telling me if, when you said you loved your love with a 'B,' you really meant Bookworm and—Baldwin—and—and——" But here he stopped, not liking to add the word "Bore," which earlier in the day he had used so lightly.

Chrissie looked shy, demure, and happy all in one.

"All girls 'love their loves' with 'B's,' don't you know, because they are Bachelors—really I meant nothing else," she said softly. And the way in which she said it put Hubert's doubts effectually to flight.

"Ah," said Ruth contentedly to herself, as she fidgetted round the room preparing bandages and lotions for the bruised shoulder and ankle, "she'll love her love with another letter before the year's out, I take it—with an 'H' maybe, for that stands for Hubert and Husband."

And Ruth was right.

A NOTE TOO MUCH.

By C. G. FURLEY.

Author of "A Chemical Experiment," "The Water of Revelation," etc.

(The post-mistress of Benthwaite addresses her niece.)

CHAPTER I.

JUST in her travelling-dress, my dear, grey cashmere, and a little gray bonnet, with only a tiny little pink feather in it; though she would have looked as sweet as anybody could desire in white satin and orange-blossoms. But I know why she had such a quiet wedding, and it's just like her, wanting to show consideration to mean cats that don't deserve that she should ever give them a thought; though they—I mean Miss Jefferies—did cause our Miss Lucy a many thoughts, and sad ones too. And very glad am I that I was able to put a spoke into Miss J.'s wheel. But you don't know about that, my dear. Well, I'll explain; and I think you'll say that your old aunt has done one good action since she became post-mistress at Benthwaite.

It was at the beginning of the winter before last that Miss Lucy Mansfield went to Liverpool on a visit to her sister. Miss Mansfield had married young Jefferies, the Rector's son—and it's to be hoped that he's a better man than his sister is a woman, or she'll have but a poor life of it; but that has nothing to do with my story. Miss Lucy had been a bit worn-out and low-spirited for some time; her brother Jack's going to India had been a blow to her—her half-brother, I should say—for Mrs. Mansfield was a widow when she married the doctor; but no man could have been a better father to his own child than the doctor was to Jack Archer, and Jack and Lucy worshipped each other. The visit to Liverpool made her quite cheerful again, though; and something more than cheerful. I'm old now, Jenny; but I was young in my day, and had my chances too, though I was too proud to take any of them; and I could guess what it was that brought such a pretty colour to her cheek, and made her go about the village smiling to herself as if she was always thinking of some happy thing. And then there came boxes of flowers by parcel post for Miss Lucy. They were lovely flowers, I know; for once one of the boxes came to pieces

in my hands—it's all nonsense for spiteful people, who would like to get the post-office into their own hands, to say that I ever wilfully pry into things; but if folks will fasten things carelessly, they must take the consequences. Well, I saw one lot of flowers; and what's more, everyone spoke of the lovely hothouse things Mrs. Mansfield had in her drawing-room, and that Frances Jefferies tackled Miss Lucy about them in this very shop. And this was what she said:

"I just looked in at your mother's on my way down, Lucy, and came away green with envy at the flowers I saw. Where do you get them at this season? Not here, surely."

"No, they came from Liverpool," answered Miss Lucy, looking a bit uncomfortable at being questioned.

"Oh, from Helen, I suppose. I must scold Harry for not sending some to me."

"It was not Helen who sent them."

"Indeed! then who was it?" Miss Frances went on.

"Ah—another friend."

For, though Miss Lucy was simple, she wasn't just a fool, and wasn't going to tell everything to that inquisitive monkey.

"What a charming woman she must be!" answered Miss Jefferies, eyeing the other all over; but Lucy just turned her head away, blushing scarlet; and without explaining to her friend whether it was man or woman who had sent the flowers, she began asking me what would be the postage to India of the Christmas Number of the "Graphic."

But there are matters in which silence is as clear a reply as speech could be; and it was easy to guess that Miss Jefferies knew quite well that it was some gentleman who sent the flowers, and that she made no doubt he was paying attention to Miss Lucy. Now that angered her; for she counted herself the beauty of the village, and never let a man glance at another girl if she could help it.

If he hadn't been her brother, not to speak of his being the only man she ever showed her real self to, I don't suppose Helen Mansfield would have been allowed to marry Harry Jefferies, and the thought of Lucy having a lover drove her wild. But you see she couldn't interfere yet. She hadn't heard anything about the matter from her brother, who, to tell the truth, knew her too well to be very fond of her; and even her audacity did not dare catechise Miss Lucy as much as she would have

liked. But she began to go about saying that Helen was making her brother indifferent to his own family, and that all his affection and kindness were reserved for his wife's people.

Well, that complaint was taken out of her mouth pretty soon; for, early in the New Year, she was asked to go to Liverpool for a month, and off she went, thinking she could find a sweetheart there too. But her sister-in-law knew what she was about, and was more than a match for her. Miss Frances hadn't been gone more than a week when the Rector got a letter from his son asking him to receive as a guest a friend of Harry's; and Mr. Lovat, who hadn't been very well of late, would, he thought, be benefited by the air of Brenchwaite.

I hadn't been blind all this time, Jenny, as you may guess. I had noticed that, after every box of flowers arrived, Miss Lucy had posted a letter addressed to one "Arthur Lovat, Esq.," somewhere in Liverpool. After a while, too, there came letters addressed "Miss Mansfield, in a hand I didn't know; and usually on the day these came—I've known her come a day too soon, though—she would come down to the shop, and, after buying some sewing cotton or a box of hair-pins (the quantity of hair-pins she used that winter was enormous, and her hair cut short too), she would ask in a casual way if there were any letters for her, quite as if it was an afterthought, you know. The Liverpool letters, you see, didn't come till noon, after the daily delivery was over; and she couldn't wait till next morning for his.

I knew what was going on, then, when Mr. Arthur Lovat came to stay at the Rectory, though I didn't say a word to anybody; and I only wondered how long it would be before all was settled. It wasn't very long; only a week, unfortunately. Why unfortunately? you'll ask. Ah, Jenny, my dear, you may refuse a man once too often, as I know to my cost; but it's a worse risk still to accept him too soon. There's many an honest, true-hearted girl likes a man as well after she has seen him twice as she does when she has been his wife for ten years; but he doesn't know that. I don't say he doesn't believe it—trust a man's vanity for that!—but his belief is ready to be shaken by any chance breath of circumstance; and that's all the more likely to happen if he is rich and she poor, as was the case with these two.

I could tell, the first time I saw Miss Lucy after the engagement was announced, that it was a love for all time and eternity with her; but then I am a woman—not to speak of my having known her all her life—and can tell that when a girl does not look proud, as if she had made a conquest of a man, but quietly content, as if her life was just made complete, it's all right with her. But a man can't see that. He likes to be dragged, for a week or two at least, at a woman's apron-strings, and treated at the same time as if he had miraculously dropped from the clouds.

And this Mr. Lovat, though he was a good-looking—and, I think, a good-hearted fellow—wasn't quite good enough for Miss Lucy. You see he was impulsive, and he knew it; which made him suspicious. Once he had done a thing he recognised that he had not considered it carefully enough first, and then he began to wonder if he had been taken advantage of. He would have required a far longer and more intimate knowledge of Miss Mansfield than he yet had, to realise how thoroughly true and thoughtful she was. She never said a thing she didn't mean, nor wouldn't have done so to save her life.

Still, things might have gone smoothly enough if Miss Jefferies could have been kept out of the way, which she couldn't, worse luck. As soon as Miss Lucy's engagement came out she recognised that she had been taken away from Brethwaite on purpose to let it take place (Helen had always been more than a match for her in domestic manoeuvring, and she hated her for it); so she said she didn't feel well, and must get home again; and back she came, bent on making mischief, as I could tell the moment I set eyes on her.

Well, she's pretty, there's no denying that; if she were only half as good as she's good-looking, she wouldn't be a bad sort of woman at all.

Now Arthur Lovat was a great deal with his sweetheart; but still he was staying at the Rectory, and had to be polite to the young lady of the house when she was present. The housemaid told me that it was positively sickening to see the way in which she threw herself at him, singing little songs to him, and teasing him, and appealing to him for advice and help on every trifling occasion, till the poor man didn't know whether he stood on his head or his heels with her making him so vain about himself. She wanted to make him fancy he had thrown himself away

on Miss Lucy; but I think every time he went to Mrs. Mansfield's he must have felt that he breathed a purer air. But then that witch would insist on going with him to see her "darling Lucy," and when she was walking home with him would try to insinuate herself into his good graces again.

I saw her make a very good hit once, and all its success came of his not being well enough acquainted with the family he was going to marry into. She had brought him down here with her when she wanted to buy something—she was always dragging him about the village at her heels, as if he were her private property—and while she was looking over my whole stock of embroidery silks, fingering them and tangling them up, and never buying any after all, she said:

"Dear Lucy is looking so different now from what she did a few months ago; I thought she would never get over Jack Archer's going to India; she was quite broken down for some time after. But really it was necessary he should go; Mrs. Mansfield was quite glad to get rid of him, he was such a scapegrace."

Young Archer had been a little bit wild, it is true; driving into Combermere, and going to the billiard-room at the King's Head there a little too often; but he had nothing to do, and so must find amusement of some sort. There wasn't a bad inch in him, and he'll do right enough now that he has got this appointment. But there's no doubt he had caused his mother some anxiety, and she very rarely spoke of him, and neither did Miss Lucy. Apparently Mr. Lovat had never heard of him, for he said, quite surprised-like:

"Indeed, Lucy has never spoken of Mr. Archer."

"No, of course not; I can quite understand that," answered Miss Jefferies.

He hesitated a little, as if he was ashamed of his own feelings, before he spoke again; but jealousy got the upper hand of him.

"Was she—attached to him?"

"Attached! She was devoted to him; she worshipped him," cried Miss Frances; but I could see quite clearly that Mr. Lovat had quite a mistaken idea of who this Mr. Archer was, so I put in my word.

"And natural enough it was that she should be fond of her brother," said I. But that witch took up my words and gave them a twist to suit her own purpose.

"Yes; I believe they were quite like a real brother and sister," she added; and just at that moment, as it chanced, Miss Lucy passed the window, and Miss Jefferies must needs rush out to speak to her, and Mr. Lovat followed, and my chance of explaining the true relationship of Jack Archer to Miss Mansfield was lost.

That was the day before Mr. Lovat left Benthwaite. You see business must be attended to; and though, or perhaps because, he was the youngest partner in the firm of Lovat, Macnamara, and Lovat, the shipping agents, he had to return to work pretty soon. I think he hadn't seen Miss Lucy very often in Liverpool, where they met first, and he had been only a fortnight here, a week before he proposed to her and a week after—long enough to fall in love with her, but not long enough to find out how wise he was to do so. Ah me! perhaps it takes far more time than he could spare—many a year of married life with all its griefs and joys, to show a man whether or not Heaven guided his choice of a wife! But assuredly Mr. Lovat went away from Benthwaite, knowing very little of the real character of the girl he meant to marry, and with his head dazed and his faith shaken a little by Miss Jefferies's deceit and witcheries.

He was an honourable man, as men's ideas of honour go—good enough in their way, my dear, but not going far enough. If a man has promised to marry a girl, he feels bound to keep his word by making her his wife, and never thinks that he may be breaking his promise in all that gives it any value by not giving her the love and trust that are the centre of true marriage. That's moralising, I know, which is a thing I'm not given to; but I have seen a many cases where the man had better have broken with his betrothed and let her bear the pain of his faithlessness, than swear at the altar to love and honour her when he could not be sure of doing either. But as I have said, Mr. Lovat was an honourable man. I believe that in his inmost soul he was by this time doubtful if he loved Miss Mansfield, and more than doubtful if she loved him; but the marriage was fixed to take place at Easter, and he never said a word to hinder it.

Miss Lucy never doubted him. It wasn't in her nature to distrust anybody, and it used to make my heart quake to see her going about with Miss Jefferies. I felt that creature to be dangerous, though I could not have told how. It was she who

suggested that they two should be photographed together, knowing well that her straight features and large eyes would come out better than Miss Lucy's sweet irregular face. A copy of this portrait was, of course, sent to Mr. Lovat, and it was just the thing to put him out of conceit with his choice; for a man must be very deeply and truly in love before he can admit that his sweetheart isn't a beauty, but that he doesn't care a straw about it. He usually wants to fancy that she is the prettiest girl he ever met, and that every other man will envy him the moment he casts eyes on her. But if his fancy wavered, his allegiance did not; and time went on till the day before that fixed for the wedding.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jefferies were staying with Mrs. Mansfield; the bridegroom was at the Rectory. He spent the evening before the marriage with his bride—he and Miss Jefferies. How she clung on to him! From the moment he arrived she was continually hanging around him, till, as Mrs. Blamire, the clerk's wife, remarked to me, you'd have thought it was she he was going to marry and not Miss Mansfield. On this evening, of course, he had to walk home with her, seeing he was living in her father's house. The two had just set out when Lucy noticed that her lover had forgotten his cane. You know the path from Mrs. Mansfield's house to the Rectory—how after going out at the front door you have to go down by the side of the garden before you strike into the main road. Well, Miss Lucy said that if she went out by the back door and ran down to the bottom of the garden she could overtake them and give him the stick, thinking, doubtless, that she would get a kiss in return, poor lamb!

Off she went. She was gone longer than those in the house expected, but they didn't fret about that. At last, however, her mother looked out of the window and saw her coming slowly up the garden-walk, with the cane still in her hand. When she entered the drawing-room they saw that she was deadly pale.

"What is the matter, my darling?" cried Mrs. Mansfield, "have you caught cold?" And Mrs. Jefferies added, "You did not catch them, I suppose!"

"Yes, I caught them," answered Miss Lucy in a stupid-like, heavy voice, as if she was speaking in her sleep; and then she seemed to take herself up, and said: "No, I did not; and I think I am cold." Then she began to cry, and sobbed out:

"Yes, so cold, so very cold," quite demented-like.

Of course there was a fuss, and her mother got her some wine, and made her go to bed at once, and made much of her in every way, thinking that she had caught a chill, and was perhaps a bit nervous. Miss Lucy let them do pretty much what they liked with her, and they, for their part, did not pay much heed to anything she said, though afterwards Mrs. Mansfield recalled the one request she made as she bade her good-night: "Mother, ask Harry to bring Arthur here to-morrow before it is time for me to go to church."

I don't suppose Mrs. Mansfield ever thought of the matter at the time, she was so flurried, but next morning Miss Lucy repeated her demand.

"Why do you want to see him?" asked her mother; but she would not explain.

"I must see him," she said; that was all.

Mrs. Mansfield argued about such a wish being unusual, unreasonable, unconventional; all she could get out of her daughter was, "I must see him. I will not go to church unless I see him."

Finally she went to her son-in-law, and told him what Lucy asked of him. He, too, wanted to know why she wished to see her bridegroom; but she would not state a reason, whereupon he fumed and scolded, and refused to do what she wanted.

"Then I won't go to church!" she repeated, with a quiet, sullen obstinacy, that was as unlike her as it could be.

They held out till it was indeed time to start for church, for it was to be an early wedding, as the happy pair were to go a long way on their wedding journey that day. Still she refused to move, till Mr. Jefferies, in a temper as you may guess, set off to do her bidding.

But he did not succeed in it. When he got to the Rectory he found that the whole party—the bridegroom, the Rector, Miss Jefferies, who was to be bridesmaid, and even the servants—had gone to church, and were now waiting for the bride. He hadn't quite the audacity to call Mr. Lovat from there, so off he scuttled home again, to tell the position of affairs.

Miss Lucy made no more ado then. She let her mother and sister put on her wreath and veil, and meekly took her place in the carriage.

There were a good many people in the church, for everybody was fond of Miss

Mansfield, and besides, a wedding's a wedding—a sight that goes to every woman's heart. I was there, and I did say to myself that though I had seen many a bride go to the altar, there never was one like this. She was quite calm, and cold as a marble statue; she held her head up and looked straight before her, but I think she saw nothing; and her teeth were pressed fast into her under lip. She hardly leaned on her brother-in-law's arm, while behind her came that cat, smiling, and blushing, and glancing around, and looking, I must say, as pretty as a picture.

Well, they got to the chancel steps, and the service began. The first part was got through smoothly enough, and Mr. Lovat answered the "Wilt thou?" as cheerfully as need be.

Then came the bride's turn.

"Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to——?" Well, Jenny, I suppose you know the marriage service as well as most girls do, so there's no need for me to go through the whole speech. But when the Rector had finished there came, clear and plain, Lucy Mansfield's answer:

"No!"

CHAPTER II.

IN a moment there was dead silence; then a sound, a sort of universal gasp, went through the church, and ceased in a moment. Everyone wondered what was coming next. The Rector stared, as if he thought his ears had played him false, and the bridegroom turned and looked at his bride as if he fancied that reason had deserted her. Even Miss Jefferies trembled and her breath came fast, though she got red, while everyone else was deadly pale. Only Miss Lucy herself stood still and calm, as if nothing unusual had occurred.

After a few moments, the Rector pulled himself together sufficiently to say something about this being an unusual occurrence, and to ask the congregation to go away. But the congregation wouldn't; everybody wanted to hear the explanation of the scene. Then the Rector turned to the bride, and asked her why she had refused to take Mr. Lovat for her husband.

"Mr. Lovat could not have kept in his heart the vow he was about to take, therefore I prefer to set him free from it," she answered very quietly; but then she broke down. She turned to her brother-in-law,

who had been standing by her side to give her away, and who, when she gave her strange reply to the Rector's question, had come closer to her and drawn her arm within his.

He is a good man, Jenny, my dear; in fact all the good of the family is concentrated in him; and he knew that whatever Miss Lucy did was sure to be right. And now, "Oh Harry, Harry," she cried so pitifully, "he loves your sister better than me."

Even that witch turned pale at that. "She must have overheard us last night," she said half to herself, half to Mr. Lovat, who looked from one girl to the other as if it wouldn't have wanted much temptation to make him strike either to the ground. I never saw such a mixture of shame and anger on a man's face.

"Yes," said the poor pale bride, answering Miss Jefferies's exclamation; "yea, I heard you. I ran down the garden, thinking to overtake you at the corner of the hedge and give Arthur his cane which he had forgotten; and I heard him say, when you asked him if he were not happy; that he was never happy when you were near, for you always made him waver in his allegiance to me, and that the best thing he could wish for his peace and mine was that he might never see you after his wedding-day. And then I heard you laugh. Good Heavens! you laughed at the thought of his being faithless to me, whom you had called your friend. Then I knew that I must give him up: and they would not give me the chance of breaking with him till now, when we stood at the altar together."

The Rector interfered now, and scuffled the wedding party into the vestry. If ever shame fell on a woman in a moment, it did on Miss Jefferies on that day. Mrs. Mansfield and Helen clung about Lucy; Mr. Jefferies had put his arm round her and almost carried her away. Even the Rector held aloof from his daughter, and Mr. Lovat shrank from her as if she had been a snake. And the look that man cast on the girl who had refused to marry him, as she was borne, half-fainting, past him—the look of reverence and longing!—would have puzzled a philosopher. Men are queer, Jenny; strange complicated creatures, that never know more than half their mind at a time. We women are different. We love a man or we don't, and we'll take him or we won't; and there's an end to it. But they! they'll love a

woman, and want to keep her, and think no one like her; and be faithless to her all the time—faithless with one half of their nature and true with the other—till you don't know what they mean by love, and they don't know themselves.

But this I do say, and stick to it, that it was a blessed thing for Miss Lucy that she acted as she did that day, for till then he thought her only a gentle thing without much depth or firmness of character in her; and if they had married then he would have been, perhaps, kind enough to her in a way, but would have trifled with her, and been careless and selfish, and wouldn't have found out her real character in fifty years. But now he began to respect her.

At the time, however, that seemed as if it was about the worst fate that could befall him; for, as a matter of honour, he was bound to marry Miss Jefferies now, having compromised her, as people said. Stuff and nonsense! it was she who compromised him. He had been weak and foolish; but it was she who was wicked. But if his conduct had been that of a wilful fiend it wouldn't have needed a severer punishment, I thought, than that of marrying her. He had never respected her, and he wasn't likely to begin to do so now. She didn't respect him either; but that didn't matter, she didn't care two straws about that. All she wanted in a husband was some one who could give her gay clothes, and a fine house, and a carriage; and for that purpose Mr. Lovat would serve as well as any other.

She insisted on what she called "a decent interval" elapsing before the marriage took place. Mr. Lovat would have got it over next day, if he could have managed it, since it had to be; and Mrs. Mansfield—well, some people said it was unladylike of her, but I could understand her feelings—she actually sent over Miss Lucy's wedding-cake to Miss Jefferies, with her compliments, and the remark that it had been kept long enough, and had better be used at once, as it was of no use to the former owner.

This new wedding was to take place in the summer. The Rector, who, poor man! was heartily ashamed of the whole affair, didn't want it to be at Brentthwaite, and suggested that Frances might be married from her brother's house; but here Mrs. Harry put in her word, and said that, as she had no longer any acquaintance with Mr. Lovat, and did not desire any, she must decline the privilege of having anything to

o with his marriage with Miss Jefferies. Really everybody was so disagreeable about the matter that I began to think the couple would have to make a sham elopement of it and run away with everybody's consent, which would have been just the right sort of end for a sham love-match. It was Miss Lucy, bless her! who interfered at last. She wrote to her sister that she would consider it a discourtesy to her if there were any unfriendly feeling shown to Frances and Mr. Lovat, and that she begged Helen to remember that, for Harry's sake, she ought not to quarrel with any member of his family, though Harry, to tell the truth, was quite as disgusted with his sister as anybody could be. But the end of it was that the family concluded to pretend that they quite approved of the marriage.

Miss Jefferies herself was in the best of spirits, ordering new gowns to her heart's content, and telling everybody, high and low, that though she wouldn't for worlds have interfered with poor dear Lucy's happiness, and had done her best—her best, indeed!—to keep Mr. Lovat to his engagement, she couldn't but see the hand of Providence in the prevention of the marriage at the last moment. It had been a case of love at first sight of her with Arthur, she said; and though it was very hard on Lucy that things should have chanced as they did, it was really better for even her that she should lose her sweetheart than marry a man who did not love her.

"It would only have been three lives spoilt," she said with that acid sweetness of hers; "but now she hoped all would be well. No doubt Lucy would meet some one really suited to her; or, if not, she would make a charming old maid."

She had the impertinence to say that to me (for she wasn't at all particular who she gossiped with), and it angered me so that I gave her one in return.

"Miss Lucy will always be charming, whatever her fate in life may be," said I. "And though it mayn't become an old maid to stand up for her class, I've often thought they aren't the worst women going, nor the least attractive either. There are some poor creatures that I believe husbands are given to just that their powers of making mischief may be confined to one household. It's hard on the husband, it's true; but somebody must suffer, and, as a rule, he has brought his fate on himself."

She made no reply to that, I tell you.

Her path wasn't all roses just then

either, though she put a bold face on it, and, perhaps not being cursed with too much feeling, really was happy enough. Mr. Lovat didn't behave in a very lover-like manner. He came to see her only twice in three months, and then only for a day; and he didn't write to her very often either, not more than once a fortnight or so. I could tell that, of course; for I knew his writing well, through seeing it so often on his letters to Miss Lucy. Miss Jefferies said that it was business that kept him so much away from her, and perhaps the excuse was truer than she thought; but it would have required a good deal of business, and of a very disagreeable kind too, to account for the look his face wore when he did come to Branthwaite. It was not the expression which usually characterises a man who is going to marry a girl he loves.

Besides, there was one incident that happened on his last visit to the village, which proved clearly enough how much of his heart was in the affair.

Miss Lucy and her mother had gone away travelling after the marriage was broken off. New scenes are supposed to cure every possible ache of soul or body nowadays; though if that poor girl could tell a mountain from a lake just then, it's as much comprehension of scenery as I give her credit for. But their house was shut up and the garden was allowed to run wild. It was rather pitiful to see the honeysuckle she used to train so prettily up the pillars of the verandah, blown about and broken by the wind, and the roses dying on the bushes for want of anybody to pluck them. So I thought often enough, and apparently the pity of it struck more than me.

At least, one dark night, Bagley, the policeman, was going his rounds, when he saw a figure prowling round the house. He thought it was a thief, and, being a wise man who would rather send a robber about his business with a shout than have a tussle with him, which might end in the wrong man getting the worst of it, he called out:

"Who's there?"

There was no answer, and the man didn't make a bolt, as Bagley expected, but merely moved quietly into a darker part of the verandah; so the poor policeman was compelled to tackle him. He leapt over the paling that separated the garden from the road, and made for the corner where he guessed the intruder to be. The tree-

passer tried to get away then; but it being dark, and he, perhaps, not having all his wits about him, it ended in his falling into the policeman's hands. Then there was a struggle, for, though the stranger cried out, "Let me go, you fool; I wasn't doing any harm," and the voice was that of a gentleman, Bagley thought that, having once made a capture, he wouldn't lose the credit of it. So he clung on till he got him into a corner where he could turn his lantern on him; and then when he saw him, who do you think it was? No other than Mr. Lovat, come, within a fortnight of his marriage with another woman, to have a last look at his old love's home.

He gave Bagley half-a-sovereign, and told him to say nothing of the matter; but you see, money come by in that way has a knack of loosening the tongue instead of doing the reverse; and before the night was over, the affair was known at the "Greyhound," and the news was in the mouth of everybody in the village within twenty-four hours. No doubt it came to Miss Jefferies's ears at last; but she took no notice of it. She wasn't of the soft-hearted kind that give up a man because he has ceased to care for them.

So time went on till within a week of the wedding-day. Mr. Lovat was too busy to come to Benthwaite till the very eve of the marriage, and just then his business was of an anxious kind. Trade had been bad everywhere, and there had been several failures in Liverpool, when one day I read in the newspaper that one very large house—I forget the name of it now—had fallen.

"Several other well-known firms are involved in its ruin," the paragraph said. "Among others, Lovat, Macnamara, and Lovat, the shipowners, must go down."

"What will Miss Jefferies say to this?" I asked myself. For I knew that if Lucy Mansfield's lover had not been rich she would have been allowed to keep him for aught that Miss Frances cared. And now that she had secured him, to find his money all gone away like dead leaves!

"Providence treats folks as they deserve," I said to myself; but, bless you, Miss Jefferies was one of those who are always bent on outwitting Providence, and that is what she tried to do now.

It was in the evening paper, which, as you know, we do not get in Benthwaite till the morning after it has been published, that I read the news of Mr. Lovat's firm's

failure. Well, it was quite early in the day, not more than an hour after I had seen the paragraph, that Miss Jefferies came down to buy some stamps. She had a letter in her hand, and I never in my life saw anyone so excited.

"Have you sent the morning letters away?" she asked me.

"Yes," I answered, "I sealed the bag and sent it off just about ten minutes ago."

"How unfortunate!" she cried. "I made as much haste as I could, and I thought I should catch the post. I wanted this letter to go at once. It can't be helped, I suppose."

"I'm afraid not, miss," said I, "unless you were to drive into Combermere and post it there."

For a moment, I thought she would take the suggestion; but she caught herself up. "How stupid I am!" she exclaimed. "There is really no reason for such special haste; but I wanted to get it over as quickly as possible. But if I post my letter now, it will reach Liverpool to-morrow morning, won't it?"

"Oh yes, miss," I assured her, so she put on the stamp and popped the letter into the box.

Well, Jenny, I don't mind confessing that I took it out and looked at the address. It was for Mr. Lovat, as I had guessed, and puzzled my head for a good while, wondering what the contents could be. It was sealed with wax, or—well, perhaps—I don't know! Though anything of that sort I never have done; being, as I said, not an inquisitive woman. But, you see, I couldn't quite fancy Miss Jefferies being in such a hurry to convey consolation to her lover for a misfortune of that kind. Under any other, she would have behaved beautifully, but the loss of money was too serious a thing. I concluded at last that she hadn't noticed the paragraph in the paper, and wanted only to give Mr. Lovat orders to bring her something she fancied from Liverpool. But the mystery was cleared up before the day was out.

The morning papers come here about noon. I don't get one myself; there's too much politics in it, and none of those nice murders, and elopements, and bits of news about the aristocracy that do one's heart good. But they get one at the Rectory.

Before it could have been half-an-hour in the house, down came Miss Frances again, pale as death, but trying to smile.

"I suppose my letter isn't gone yet," she began.

"No, miss; I don't send the letters off till six o'clock."

"That is fortunate. I want to have it back again; there is something in it which I want to alter—that is, something I have omitted to say—something that— give me the letter, please."

"I can't do that, miss," said I, "it is against the law."

"Oh, nonsense! What a silly idea!"

"Silly it may be; but it's the law."

"I am sure you were never meant to keep the law so strictly as that," she said, getting paler still; and her lips began to tremble.

"That's not for me to judge," I answered, losing my temper a little. Somehow, Miss Jefferies's mere presence always had an irritating effect on me. "And besides I don't know which is your letter." Which wasn't just the truth, you may say; but I have two selves, my private and my official one, and in my official capacity I never know who writes any letter.

"You must know my writing by this time. Or, if you don't—this letter is addressed to Mr. Lovat. You see now how important it is that I should get it back, don't you?"

"Well, no, miss. I can't expect you to think with me; but really a young lady's love-letters are not the most important that go in the mail-bag."

"But there is something I want to say to him."

"Oh, you'll have plenty of time to say all that you like after you are married."

"I may never be married! I don't know! But this is something very pressing. He must learn it at once."

"Then," I said, "I should advise you to write another note to Mr. Lovat and post it now. He'll get it at the same time as the other letter, and so it will be all right."

"No, it won't. There's something in that letter I don't want him to see, something which I should never have written, and which will annoy him if he reads it. You see I am confiding in you. You will do what I want now, will you not, and show what a dear old creature you can be?"

Old, indeed! And me not more than forty-five.

"It's very flattering to have you confide in me, miss, when you're in a fix and want my help," I told her, and pretty indignantly too; "but as it would be as much as my place is worth to do what you want, I really can't oblige you. And as for Mr. Lovat being annoyed by anything you say,

I was given to understand that you had fascinated him so that whatever you did seemed perfectly right in his eyes. Otherwise he might not have thought—ahem!" I stopped and coughed, and left her to fill up the blank in her own mind, knowing that she would understand me to mean that the way in which she had lured him from Miss Lucy mightn't seem a very fine action to anybody with their eyes open. "But," I went on in a minute, "if there's anything in your letter which will vex him it's just as well that he should learn the best and the worst of you just now. It may save him a painful surprise after you are his wife."

"Oh! I shall never be his wife if I don't get back that letter!" she cried, and with that she burst into tears.

"So much the better for him," I said to myself; but to her I merely remarked: "It must be a pretty serious blunder you have made, then; but my duty is my duty, and it's clear against it to let any letter that has been dropped into that box leave this place except in a mail-bag. I can't do it, Miss Jefferies. It would be wrong, and would take fifteen pounds a year and the dignity of being post-mistress from me if ever it was found out."

"Risk that," she begged of me. "I don't believe it would ever be known; but if it were I would give you as much as you lost by helping me, and be grateful to you all my life besides."

A precious possession her gratitude would be, I'm sure!

"Right is right," I answered her doggedly. "And, moreover, if you did want to pay me for doing what I shouldn't—disobeying the Postmaster-General, and the Queen too, as one may say, seeing that I'm one of Her Majesty's officials—I don't see where you would get the money to do it. Excuse my speaking so frankly; but it's only the truth. The Rector isn't said to be a rich man, and now that Mr. Lovat has lost his money——"

"But Mr. Lovat has not lost his money," she cried. "That's just the trouble of it—at least it will be if you don't do what I ask of you. I'll tell you all about it, and then I know you will pity and help me. This morning I read in last night's paper that his firm had failed, or was certain to fail. There was no time to be lost, I felt, with the wedding fixed for this day week; for though I like him very much as he is, it would be quite different if he were ruined. You see that, do you not?"

"Oh yes, miss, I see it," said I.

"It would be folly to marry him in such a case. So I wrote to say that under existing circumstances I thought the engagement had better be broken off. That was in the letter I posted this morning. And now to-day's paper says that the report of failure is false, and that Lovat, Macnamara, and Lovat are perfectly sound. Don't you see that I must get my letter back, or I am ruined? Do give it me."

"My duty, miss, my duty," I repeated. "I'm very sorry for you; but as a matter of conscience I can't do what you want. Not if your life depended on it, much less your marriage. And," said I, "it's just as well that Mr. Lovat should know the depth of your love for him, and see whether he gained or lost by being faithless to Miss Lucy Mansfield."

She writhed at that, but she did not answer the gibe.

"Don't you see," she cried, "that if he gets this letter, which makes me appear in such a mercenary light, he won't marry me?"

"He'd be a fool if he did," I couldn't help saying.

"But just think of all I have undergone for his sake—everybody hating and despising me. I have braved it out, and I should not mind it much if all were to end well; but to be cast off in turn—and I shall get no sympathy, you may be sure!—it's too hard!"

"Not a bit harder than you deserve, miss," I answered, flying out at her at last, and thinking I did well. "You have made a man forget his honour and his duty, and nearly broken the heart of one of the sweetest young ladies, all to gratify your own selfishness and greed; and now that same selfishness and greed have brought about your punishment, and you must just take it. Nothing can never undo all Miss Lucy has suffered; and as for Mr. Lovat, though I don't hate him so much as to wish him to marry you, he deserves to pay for the pain he has caused; but for their sakes as well as for my own, I'll do what is right. That letter you shan't have, unless you kill me first—and killing's murder, you know, even if it's only an old maid you kill; and you may just endure the shame of having your lover take you at your word, and the disappointment of missing a good match, and the torture of knowing that you have brought it all upon yourself. You'll get no sympathy, you say, but you'll get every whit as much as you deserve."

At that she turned on me like a fiend—threatened to get me dismissed, threatened to ruin my business, threatened I really don't know what. I didn't care. I knew I was on the safe side; and when she abused me most, I said I would tell every one the reason of her spite if she tried to do me an ill turn.

At last she ran out of the shop, and a quarter of an hour after I saw her driving in the pony phaeton towards Combermere, and whipping the poor pony unmercifully. She sent off a telegram to Mr. Lovat, I'm told, bidding him take no notice of the letter that was to follow; but that only bewildered him, bothered as he was by many things at the time, and when the letter came it explained the telegram only too clearly. He wasn't over sorry, I fancy, to be thrown over, and wrote at once to say he quite agreed with her that it was better all should be at an end between them. I really thought Miss Jefferies would have died with rage, and for a week or two she was almost out of her mind with spite and vexation; but she recovered, and pretended that she had found out at the last moment that she and Mr. Lovat were not suited to each other, and so gave him up—was a second edition of Miss Mansfield, in fact.

And the end? Well, if I had been Miss Lucy I could never have looked at Mr. Lovat again; but if she has a fault, it is that she is too soft-hearted. He didn't venture to approach her in person; but after six months or so he got Mr. Harry Jefferies to plead his cause; and I will say for him that there's no doubt of his being most heartily and humbly in love with her now. So they were married yesterday morning, as I began by telling you; and there will be no misunderstandings of any sort between them now, I'm certain. But it will be all on account of her own sweetness if she doesn't tyrannise over her; he would take any amount of bullying from her with meekness, almost with gratitude, so ashamed is he of his past conduct.

As for Miss Jefferies, they say she is going to marry the Curate. Poor fellow!

THE MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

By SUSAN R. PHILLIPS.

WHY do I keep the bottle on the shelf?

Well, tak' it down, bairn—mind thyself, my lass!

T'auld woman's set upon her bits o' delf,

An' my poor mate gied me yon bonnie glass,

The day he sailed away for Elsinore;

We little thowt that we'd clasp hands no more.

Aye, t' bottle's big, and black, and strong enough;
 Lucky it wer, too, or it scarce had brought
 From the great seas—where meeting waves wer
 rough,

An' timbers crashed and rove—his last fond
 thought,

My mate's, who wed our auld wife's cousin, Jane.
 Draw out t' writing by t' string; 'tis plain

An' steady put, for one who had to write

When the last planks wer parting where he trod,
 An' the wind roared like thunder through the night,

The wind that bore his soul away to God,
 Wi' many a gallant fellow at his side;
 I knows, who never seed, how our Jack died.

I'se glad I did his bidding, never knowing!

Canst read the writing? "Ship is settling fast."

I say I never hears the north wind blowing,

But them few words seem sounding in t' blast:

"Our Bill will see to my poor wife an' lad,"

Her bearings, an' his name—no time he had

For more—closed t' bottle; said, I lay, a prayer,

An' heaved his message far into the dark;

I hope he had no long, fierce struggle there,

When t' angry breakers closed above t' barque.

He wer no swimmer: we two understood,

When the end had to come, why, come it would.

Jane an' my missus never had agreed,

I thowt her fine and stuck-up like, mysen;

An' as time lingered by, an' all men seed,

The "Flying Spray" would mak no port agen,
 My Sally says, "Jane mun ha' saved some brass,
 She'll manish well enow," says my auld lass.

"She's but one bairn to keep, an' she's good hands."

I heerd, but niver spoke; an' that same day,

When hope wer reckoned overed, by the sands

I walked to Jack's bit cottage on t' brae,

An' by t' door I hears a moan o' pain,

An' I looks in, and there she lay—our Jane!

Lay, wi' the hair she made sike stir about,

All rough and scomfished back'ard frev her face;

Lay, by t' hearth, where t' fire had slackened out,

An' all seemed lost i' the deserted place,

Wi' t' Gazette clutched her poor hands between;

I knowed the words t' stricken soul had seen.

I'se a rough chap an' slow; helpless I stood,

She wouldn't hear or heed for aught I said,

Nor speak a word back to me, bad or good;

I'd nowt to tell me as she wer not dead,

Only her great eyes seemed to glitter, set

On "Lost with all hands," writ in t' Gazette.

Sudden I turns, an' fast as I could stride,

Crossed over t' dunes and sought our cottage door;

Neighbours wer gossiping at Sally's side,

An' scattered, startled, as I crossed t' floor;

"Cum, lass," I says, she telled me arterwards,

She niver knew what power wer i' my words

That made her do my bidding straight, nor ask

What was't I wanted; she wer none so meek

Most times! I knowed I'd got a heavy task

To set her, yet I had no heart to speak,

But pulled her on aside t' flowing waves;

They soughed like t' psalm they sings aside t' graves!

Up on t' brae the door stood open still,

An' still sho lay there, wi' them dreadful eyes,

Blazing upon t' page. For good or ill,

For help or mischief, for true words or lies,

A woman's quicker nor a man, they say;

I know I proved it on that bitter day.

Our Sally never stopped, as I had done,

To trouble the poor half-crazed soul, but went

Where, lapped in blankets, lay their month-old
 son—

I'd clean forgot him—took him up, an' bent

To put again her face t' little lad;

"Poor bairn," she says, "he'll niver see his dad!"

An' at the touch, or at the words she spoke—

A man had, mebbey, thowt 'em hard—a cry

From the white, fast-clenched lips on sudden broke,

A wail o' one i' mortal agony;

An' as her fingers loosed on t' Gazette,

Sall in its place t' crying baby set.

I turns and leaves 'em to theersels at that,

Their ver a grate lump i' my throat an' all

An' as beside t' flowing tide I sat,

An' heerd the flitting sea-mews pipe and call,

Our grief, half gone, for our one bairn as died,

Seemed sobbing, strange like, wi' t' sobbing tide.

When I goes back, t' place wer setten straight,

An' t' babe were lying on its mother's breast,

An' by t' woman who had loved my mate,

Our Sall wer kneeling, doing of her best;

An' she looks up, an' speaking tenderly,

"We're sisters till He calls her, her and me."

We took her home, her an' her baby too.

I reckon he'd two mothers frev that day;

I don't know which on 'em made most ado,

When he took ship to sail for Bremen Bay:

An' all them years we had, nor sign, nor sound

On him wha's own his mate's warm hearth had
 found,

Till one spring day—Will's ship wer out i' t' Roads,

An' all, to please our lad, wer taut and trim,

The women smiling i' their bravest gauds,

An' I'd my medal on, to welcome him—

I reads i' t' paper, how, at Sunderland,

A bottle, wrapped i' weeds, had come to land.

In it a message—fifteen long year old—

From the barque "Flying Spray," frev Whitby
 bound.

I claimed t' bottle, an' its tale I'se told.

I likes the message wi' its trusting sound!

"Our Bill will see to my poor wife an' lad."

An' thank our Lord above, I had! I had!

NIALL.

By E. RENTOUL ESLER.

Author of "*A Dreadful Misalliance*," "*Daisy Wynne*,"
 etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

HE stood on a headland that overlooked
 the sea; a middle-aged man in the dress
 of a Romish Priest, with a grave face, and
 deep-set, shrewd, gray eyes.

It was July weather, and the wide hills
 behind him bore patches of blazing gorse
 and tufts of purple heather here and there
 on their uneven surface. Below him lay
 the sea, a rippling sheet of molten silver,
 whose tiny wavelets broke with dainty
 grace on the belt of shingle.

The scene was very beautiful; perhaps
 more beautiful because of its desolation.
 On all the miles of land and water sur-
 rounding the motionless figure on the
 headland, not a living thing stirred but an
 occasional mountain sheep browsing among
 the heather; unless the black speck that
 danced on the sea, half a league from land,
 could be regarded as a living thing.

It was on this black speck that Father

Donovan's eyes were fixed, as it moved lightly and swiftly as a sea-bird towards the shore.

A native curragh, or coracle—one of the boats made of osier-work and tarred canvas, which since long before the dawn of civilisation have been in constant use among the native population of some parts of Ireland—it looked to the uninitiated the frailest ark of safety to which human life was ever entrusted.

But it was not of its fragility, or its grace, that Father Donovan was thinking, for, in his eyes, there was neither dread nor admiration, only a miserable inarticulate anger.

The curragh had two occupants, one a girl, wearing a sailor-hat and a well-cut costume of white and navy-blue, the other a young man, who wore the cord trousers and striped shirt of the peasantry; but who carried himself like a Prince—as peasants sometimes do—and possessed a face of an unusual and very noble order of beauty.

Lightly and swiftly as a black swan the curragh glided on to the shingle. The man leaped ashore and offered both his hands to the girl, who, with a dainty movement, swung herself out beside him.

Then he gathered her shawls, her basket of fish, and other possessions on to the beach; raised the curragh with a sudden, easy movement; rested it a moment on its stern to drip; then turned it face downwards; placed the sculls beneath it; and, depositing a large stone or two on the keel, lest a rising gale should blow it away, lifted the girl's belongings again and stood looking at her, half in deference, half in adoration.

"You are splendid when you do things like that; you make me think of some of those mediæval heroes, Stilicho or Dietrich of Bern."

The girl's clear, refined tones reached the Priest, where he stood, several hundred yards away.

"It is nothing to lift the curragh," the man answered simply.

"Everything is nothing, so you always say, refusing to be flattered."

"But it is nothing. You could do it yourself if you had a mind to."

"Well, well, then it is easy," pettishly.

"Anyone could do it, and I am foolish to find you different from all your neighbours at Inchmaree; foolish to be interested in you and to like you."

They had begun to advance up the steep slope of the headland, unconsciously com-

ing straight on to where Father Donovan stood awaiting them, the line of his lips pressed closely together, and his brows drawn down into an austere frown.

"I am sure you are of the race of some of the old Kings of Ireland, or of those chiefs whose beauty procured their pardon when the sovereign was a woman; and your very name, too—Niall. Surely there was a King Niall, in Ireland, in the grand old days."

The man did not answer, not knowing what to say. All his pulses were thrilled by her words and her presence, when the momentary silence was broken by the Priest's voice speaking harshly:

"Having your silly head turned, Niall, by the light words of an idle, fine lady?"

Both started and looked up, the man's sunburnt face flushing crimson, the girl's pale colour deepening by a shade.

"You express yourself very charmingly, Father Donovan," she said, lifting her pretty dark eyes to him, dauntlessly.

"I do not wish to be complimentary, Miss Ormsby; neither my nature nor my calling has been apt to teach me flattery." Then, turning to Niall, "I came out to look for you. Mr. Luttrell is at home with the book of flies he promised to show you. He said he would wait for you, so I shall carry Miss Ormsby's fish for her, and see her home."

He took the basket and the shawl from Niall as he spoke, and the young man submitted confusedly, while the girl was too much startled by his high-handed procedure to protest.

She was a remarkably pretty girl; the lines of her face were refined and correct; her eyes very dark and clear, albeit a trifle shallow; and her figure well rounded and firm.

"Who is this Mr. Luttrell?" she asked, after a few moments' silent progress by the Priest's side.

"He is son of the Rector of a neighbouring parish."

"I thought he had been more important, since you have taken the trouble to be his messenger," she answered, with a shadow of impertinence beneath her courtesy.

"Mr. Luttrell and Niall have been friends since they were boys," he answered, with a faint in-drawing of the breath like an unuttered sigh. "But it was chiefly because I wish to speak with you, that I intercepted you to-day."

The girl did not answer. She knew she was going to be lectured; but Edith

Ormsby was not unused to being lectured by her seniors, and even enjoyed it now and then.

"I was reading a poem last night, and it made me think of you," he said in his deep, suppressed voice.

"A Latin poem, I presume," she said demurely.

"No, an English poem; and it was about a great lady, who took the trouble to make a poor man miserable."

"And for no reason! She must have been a very naughty, great lady."

"She wanted to be amused, and there was no one else at the time."

"Oh, if there was no one else, that explains it; people must be amused, you know."

"Miss Ormsby, I want you to give up making Niall your plaything. The lad is a good lad; and was a very happy one, till you came here to make him discontented."

She looked round at him somewhat startled, ready to be on the defensive, yet not knowing exactly where she had been attacked.

"It is easy for a fine lady to make a working man dissatisfied with his own life and circumstances—so easy that I wonder how any but the poorest nature can take pleasure in doing it."

"But Niall is not like a working man, he is one of Nature's gentlemen. Of course having lived all his life with you makes a difference, and his appearance counts for so much in the impression he makes. Even Uncle Charlie has noticed him, and has said he thinks him so like what Colonel Tredegar was twenty years ago. And Colonel Tredegar is a county gentleman, and one of Uncle Charlie's oldest friends."

"We are very remote from civilisation here, and life is very dull to most of us," the Priest went on, as though he had not heard a word she said; "but, for divers reasons, we are content. Contentment is a great blessing; you must not take it from Niall."

"I don't quite understand you," she said, lifting her pretty eyebrows.

"Do you talk to men of your own position as you talk to Niall, flattering them for their beauty and their strength?"

"Well, perhaps not. I could not honestly, you know, for most of them make a poor enough show."

"Ha! You see, though I know a good deal of human nature, or flatter myself that I do, society is quite an unknown

world to me. I did not think any modest woman would have said to any man the things I have heard you say to Niall."

"Mr. Donovan!"

"I say I did not think it, not knowing society. It may be quite fashionable to tell a man he looks like a King, and make him vain of his appearance."

"You do not mean to put Niall on a level with my friends, I hope," laughing slightly.

"No, I don't; it is you who seem to put him far above your friends, unless you stand on very familiar terms with these."

"Do you not think, Mr. Donovan, that you somewhat exceed your prerogative?"

"Perhaps I do, yet I mean no offence to you personally; I only wish to protect Niall. He is very dear to me, and I fear you, because of him."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to forget him. I wish you to leave him to his old occupations and his simple pleasures."

"It will be difficult." She looked at him frankly, and without any visible sign of offence. "That I am in no wise responsible for being located here, I beg you to believe. If I wished to leave Inchmaree this moment, I could not. Uncle Charlie and Aunt Ellen treat me like their bond-slave. Then—well, I like Niall, he amuses me, and the days at the Lodge would be too dreadful if I had no amusement."

"You amuse yourself with a fisherman! I never knew that a lady would take the trouble."

For the first time the girl's face flushed darkly red.

"If there had been any harm in it, Uncle Charlie would have told me so; he is only too ready to say unpleasant things."

"He looks at the matter from your point of view; I look at it from Niall's."

She was silent for a little, then she spoke:

"I think much that you have said has been uncalled for and unkind, but I grant to your wish what I should have refused to your authority. I shall try not to see Niall again."

"Thank you."

"And now I need not trouble you to accompany me further. Will you kindly give me my property, and let me wish you good-evening?"

"The basket is too heavy for you. I shall leave it at the Lodge gates."

"It is too much trouble."

"It is no trouble whatever," stolidly.

"Then thank you, and good-bye."

"Good-bye."

He lifted his broad-brimmed hat to her with his disengaged hand, and looked after her gloomily as she sped away. Her imperturbability had put him at a disadvantage, and made him feel vaguely dissatisfied with himself. And yet he had been right to say what he did, and she was an artful, heartless minx.

Father Donovan hated to censure people. Speech was difficult to him at all times, and, therefore, discontent often lay unuttered in his heart till it grew to bitterness. Father Donovan was really one of those exceptional people who could love the sinner while hating the sin, but, in Miss Ormsby's case, the two were so inextricably mingled that he hated both.

It was very rare for Edith Ormsby to be angry. There was not sufficient depth in her for anything to stir her profoundly. She was not a hundred yards away from Father Donovan before she laughed, twisting her neck sideways, and showing all her pretty teeth.

"What a funny old Priest, fierce and rude and abusive, but I suppose unlimited local authority makes him like that! I wonder why I was such a goose as to let him influence me! If I had made no promise, what would he have done, I wonder?—fulminated against me from the altar, or used bell, book, and candle privately. Well, I have promised, and I suppose I shall have to keep my word; but what a bore it will be! However, it will form a new incident for my next letter, and that is some consolation."

She was walking swiftly with a light, springy step, and by-and-by she reached a grey-stone house that was placed in a dip in the hill-side. It seemed a comfortable modern house, with a garden in front and a high stone wall sheltering it on the seaward side. Among other houses of its class it would have been unobtrusive enough; but here, where Nature was so sublime and solitary, it looked commonplace to an aggressive degree, and the girl felt this, for she shrugged her shoulders slightly as she pushed open the little wicket-gate, and sauntered slowly up the short gravelled path to the door.

The porch in front of the house was of grey-stone, too, and prettily tiled, and a few hardy geraniums bloomed within its shelter. Evidently visitors came here rarely, and were little looked for; the hall-

door stood wide open; and the wind swept boldly in, whispering round the bare walls, and fluttering the leaves of an almanack that stood on a tiny leather easel on the table.

The girl took up the almanack and looked at it absently. "We shall be here till September," she said, "and this is only the tenth of July. Well, how I shall live through the time, if I have no one to bait my hooks, or take me out in the curragh, or amuse me, Heaven knows, for I don't."

CHAPTER II.

FOR three days Miss Ormsby was very busy, laboriously and intentionally so. She turned out all her boxes, and set her maid hard at work improving and freshening her dresses. Then she wrote to her milliner in town to send her a case of hats and bonnets on approval. She did not think she would keep any of these—certainly she did not need them at Inchmaree—but, trying them on would while away an afternoon. She also studied the weekly fashion papers diligently, and wrote for books of patterns to all the houses that advertised novelties of an attractive description. Then she set her nimble wits to devise a new arrangement of the drawing-room furniture, by which that apartment could be rendered less bleak and dreary; and when she was fatigued with her exertions she sat down and wrote quite a sheaf of letters to one friend and another.

Meantime, her uncle and aunt watched her without seeming to do so. They were here at Inchmaree for a purpose, and a good deal against their private inclinations; but they hid their weariness valiantly from each other, and bore quite cheerfully the deprivation of all their home interests.

Captain Ormsby smoked much more than was good for him, and took constitutional rides and walks with praiseworthy regularity; while Mrs. Ormsby beguiled the time with art needlework, and longed hourly for the comforts of her own home.

That they had no children of their own had been for years an acute sorrow to this excellent pair, and when Ralph Ormsby's French wife died they had written the kindest letter to the bereaved husband, and had offered to be responsible for the welfare and happiness of his motherless child.

Family ties had never been the most attractive form of bondage to this careless younger son, and so he accepted the offer

of his brother and sister-in-law with the frankest alacrity; brought Edith, a small, black-eyed creature, who looked very pale and solemn in her mourning, to Ormsville; left her there with expression of many fine fatherly sentiments; and troubled himself no more about her.

The Ormsbys were the representatives of a good old family, which had declined considerably in wealth and prestige, but which, through a combination of fortunate circumstances, was steadily working its way back to social status and influence.

To fit their niece educationally for any high position, and to hope that good fortune would render the position a superior one, was in keeping with the Ormsbys' entire way of life and thought.

At first circumstances seemed to favour all their aspirations. Edith proved to be exceptionally pretty as she grew up, and to be possessed of that indefinable something which women value more than good looks, namely, good style; she was a fearless and graceful horsewoman in a county that was nothing if not a hunting county; and she was bright and entertaining, without any possibility of degenerating into an objectionably clever woman. And when she managed to attract the notice of the wife of the greatest of all the local magnates, Captain and Mrs. Ormsby felt joyously that her fortune was made. Lady Deborah called on the Ormsbys, took a fancy to Edith, and the girl was launched.

But, oh, disastrous chance! Set with full sails on a flowing sea, this perverse little craft, instead of allowing herself to be wafted to the Fortunate Isles, preferred to hug the shore, making coquettish visits to dangerous shoals and rocks. In other words, Miss Ormsby preferred amusement to a secure position, and wasted her golden hours in trifling with detrimentials.

That such a pretty girl should be talked of as only to be expected; but there is notice that injures as well as notice that elevates, and Miss Ormsby was not particular which she attracted.

This was gall and wormwood to her relatives. To see all that they had striven for and attained, carelessly flung away by this thoughtless girl; to hear her familiarly spoken of as Edie Ormsby by men whom they did not consider good enough to have a bowing acquaintance with; and to realise that her prospects were a hundred times worse at twenty-five than they had been at eighteen, took all the placid pleasure out of their lives.

Often the uncle and aunt talked over her misdoings as sufferers talk over a dire family disaster; while sweet Mrs. Ormsby grew thankful that she had no daughters of her own, since girls were so little to be relied on.

"It is all her French mother: the French are all like that," Captain Ormsby would maintain, with strong insular conviction.

And yet they loved the girl; and were proud of her, with a crushed, down-trodden pride.

They had almost resigned themselves to bear with what they could not alter, and let her work her doom in her own way, when the unexpected happened, as it sometimes does where people have quite ceased hoping. General Helston, a friend of Lady Deborah's, and as gallant an officer as ever wore a sword, fell in love with Miss Ormsby in a frank, unquestioning way, and asked her for his wife.

General Helston was not very handsome, and he was no longer young; and so, though the girl coveted his position, she hesitated. She did not fancy him, she told her aunt as carelessly as though the future might bring many similar opportunities, and she really could not give him any definite answer immediately.

Then Captain Ormsby did the most desperate action of his life. On a day's notice, he removed his establishment bodily to Inchmaree, where a friend of his had a marine residence that was always at his disposal. There at any rate she would be safe from criticism, and beyond the reach of temptation to any vagaries that would make her suitor withdraw his proposal.

The girl thought she was being coerced into an unwilling consent, and laughed to herself good-humouredly. To think of Uncle Charlie and Aunt Ellen thinking to force her into anything she did not like, how amusing and simple-minded they were! As regarded General Helston, she did not care in the least how the matter ended. He was rich, of course, and his position was unimpeachable, but then he had that dull quality of earnestness. Now if it had only been one of half-a-dozen of the subs!

At first, Inchmaree was deadly dull, a mere fishing village, with a scant and ignorant population, and not a human being except the Priest with any pretence of education. Before a week, she was quite ready to write to General Helston to come and marry her then and there, and save her from going crazy; but that was

before she met Father Donovan's protégé. After that the letter was never thought of, for Niall was absolutely delightful, extremely handsome and not uncultured, and so wonderfully strong and graceful, with just a suggestion of picturesque barbarism about him. He was as absolutely novel and delightful to her as she to him; and Miss Ormsby set herself to his subjugation with happy, cruel glee.

And to think that she had let that horrid old Priest spoil all her amusement! How could she have been such a fool! She should have stopped herself when she thought of her promise. But still a promise was a promise, and having made it, she tried to indemnify herself by sending caricatures of Father Donovan in all her letters, and writing really clever parodies of their interview.

The fourth day of her enforced idleness was an exceptionally gorgeous one. The sky was a cloudless field of turquoise blue, the sea a quivering sheet of azure, and the crisp breezes that came landwards carried with them the life-giving scents of the waves.

"I suppose my promise need not make me a prisoner," she said, discussing the matter confidentially with herself. "At any rate I am going out, though I be anathema maranatha for evermore."

She put on her little white sailor hat, and a white pilot cloth jacket over her white serge frock, and as she stood on the hillside amid the heather, she looked most fair, and sweet, and innocent.

"Like an angel," an onlooker said to himself ardently, while his heart gave a great slow plunge in his breast.

He had been sitting alone among the black jagged teeth of the great rocks that fringed the shore, but at sight of her he rose, straight as a pine, and stood looking beseechingly towards her.

"Come," she made a pretty imperious gesture of invitation, and he came to her side swiftly.

"I have not seen you for days," she said, with an air of discovery.

"No, not for four days." A sudden pallor had crept under the brown tint of his skin, and his lips trembled a little as he answered her.

"I have been so busy, and you——?"

"I have been breaking my heart."

"Breaking your heart! Why?" she looked at him with the surprised upward movement of her eyebrows that she had been told was so pretty.

"I thought I must have offended you."

"Offended me! How could you offend me?"

"I did not know."

"I assure you I was not in the least offended, so now you can be happy again."

His face did not brighten, did not even lose its chill pallor.

"Since not seeing you for a few days has made me so miserable, I have kept asking myself how shall I bear it when you have gone out of my life altogether?"

"Oh, you will forget; one always forgets sometime."

"I shall never forget. I shall not even try. Does one wish to forget that one has been happy?"

"Only when remembering causes pain; but no doubt I shall come back here now and then when worldly people tire me, and then I hope you will like me enough to welcome me."

He did not answer, and she went on. "When I come back, in four or five years perhaps, I shall find you married to some pretty Ailcen or Norah. Well, you can talk of me to your wife, and tell her what friends we have been."

His eyes gave an ominous flash at this, but as the lids were lowered she did not see it.

"When you have decided on a sweetheart, will you write and let me know? I shall like to make you a present then: something useful, a fishing-boat perhaps, though you must not cease to use the curragh, since it was in that I saw you first."

A sudden rage shot through all his being. For the first time he realised that he was being played with, and tortured intentionally. For an instant he looked up at her with a sullen, sombre glow in his eyes.

"Are you angry with me?" she came forward, and laid her pretty hand on the knotted muscles of his arm. "If I have vexed you, I am sorry. I have been very happy in my holiday here, and the pleasure is altogether owing to you. But, of course, it was only holiday making for both of us and must end: you will not mind after a time."

"No, I shall not mind." She was insinuating all he would never have dared to say, and she was very cruel.

"I almost wish we could have been better friends," she said with a light laugh. "Now if I had been a fisher girl, or if you had been—different."

He drew himself up in a royal sort of

way, and the western light fell full on his face.

"If I had been different, who knows if I should have been happier? Not even in my dreams, Miss Ormsby, have I dared to think that we might have been better friends."

Unconsciously her eyes fell before him. As she had said, he was one of Nature's gentlemen, and had the courage of race.

"I am glad of that," she answered in a subdued voice. "Then you will not mind that I am to marry General Helston sometime before the winter."

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN ORMSBY had been for a long walk that afternoon. Walking was such a necessary part of the routine of his enforced seclusion that he had come to consider it a bore. But there was no good in letting Ellen know that, she was worried enough already.

His stay here was absolutely necessary, and therefore must be borne; but if his evil genius had been at work, it could not have done worse for his personal comfort. Here was not a living soul to exchange ideas with nor a decent road to ride on; nor a thing to kill except bluebottles, and he was so fond of killing something. Now if it had only been August, with plenty of blackcock and snipe about, he could have been almost happy. But day after day nothing but his cigar and solitude, and all for a little minx who had not an idea of gratitude! Well, he must honestly admit that he had not expected her to be grateful for being brought to Inchmaree, but she would thank him for that afterwards. Both Ellen and he thought she seemed more amenable, and it was but that day that General Helston had written urging for an answer.

At this juncture his long strides brought him within sight of Father Donovan, who was leisurely proceeding in the same direction as he, and welcoming the idea of hearing the sound of his own voice, he hastened his pace and soon overtook the Priest, who received him but surlily.

The good man's temper had not improved since his interview with Miss Ormsby, and he was aware, too late, that his interference had but precipitated matters. Niall had begun to mope and be miserable already, and, in the natural course of events, this would have been postponed till after the young lady's departure from the neighbourhood.

Half-a-dozen times since that ill-fated afternoon when he had intercepted the pair on the headland, he had been tempted to go to the Lodge and tell his troubles to Captain Ormsby. That that gentleman had not the faintest suspicion of his niece's intercourse with Niall he was absolutely certain, and on his indignation over the discovery he could reckon. But tale-bearing did not appeal to one who was always judge and not witness in parish matters; and since Miss Ormsby had taken his rebuke in good part and was keeping her promise, he had virtually nothing to reproach her with. Yet he was angry against her and every one of her name, and therefore he received Captain Ormsby's overtures with the scantest courtesy, while that gentleman ascribed his gruffness not to personal dislike, but to imperfect culture.

"You have a remarkably picturesque country about here," the officer said with assertive cheerfulness, as he shortened his steps to keep pace with his companion.

"Yes, it is picturesque, as poor land so often is."

"And the people seem a wonderfully fine, hardy race. Now that young man Niall, I do not think I have ever seen a more magnificent human creature."

The Captain believed at that moment that he was making himself irresistibly agreeable.

"Humph."

"I have often thought what a soldier he would make."

"I do not approve of war."

"Oh, well no, I suppose not, but sometimes a just cause has to be maintained, and it is well to have fine men on the right side."

"Niall has never thought of military service."

"I daresay not, and no doubt it would be a pity to deprive the village of its chief ornament;" then a sudden curve in the steep path brought the two men to a sight that made Captain Ormsby wish the village had never possessed such an attraction.

On the level terrace below them, where the slope of the hill made a pause before it became merged in the rocks beneath, Niall and Miss Ormsby were standing, her hand on his arm, her face lifted to his.

There was no mistaking the attitude, it was that of two people who regarded each other with no ordinary interest; and considered as human creatures, and apart from the adventitious distinctions of social position, the connection would not have

seemed an unnatural one. This was not, however, the aspect of the case that presented itself to Captain Ormsby as he stood thunderstruck, while a fierce word shaped itself in his throat.

The Priest stopped too, and his eyes kindled.

"She has broken her word," he said. Then to the Captain: "This has been going on for weeks. I wished to tell you before, but I had not the courage."

The other's eyes sought his face incredulously. "A fisherman! A common fisherman!" he said huskily. To steady himself, he leant his hand against a boulder which jutted forward into the path, and his breath came heavily, and his face grew blank and miserable.

"I could not have believed it," he said after a pause, turning to the Priest in his helpless craving for sympathy. "There are certain things that one ranks among the impossible. And she is all we have!"

"And he is all I have!"

"And just now too, when she had a chance of undoing all her follies and saving herself."

"She will save herself, never fear. This is serious for him, not for her. I thought you would have recognised the difference."

His eyes were fixed gloomily on the pair below, who had parted now, the man going steadily and blindly forward, the girl hesitating and turning, and standing to look after him.

"I shall take her away to-morrow," Captain Ormsby said with sudden fierceness.

"To-morrow, or next week, or next year, what does it matter now, since he has grown to care?"

The Captain turned and looked at the Priest curiously. "He seems dear to you," he said.

"Yes, he is dear to me. I have had little else to love for many years."

"Is he a relative?"

"No."

"But he lives with you."

"Yes, he has lived with me since he was a little child."

For the first time, pity for these others took the place of wrath in Captain Ormsby's mind.

"I am very sorry if, through any fault of ours, you are made to suffer," he said.

"Being sorry won't matter, since the thing is done. You see we are not like the people of your world, to whom a heart-ache is a pang for a day. Here, people

have so little to cheer them that they may die of sorrow. I have half a mind to tell him his story, to save him from himself."

"Then he has a story?"

"Yes."

"Might I hear it?" He roused himself through courtesy, to semblance of an interest he was far from feeling. "If I can be of service to him, you will find me very willing, for in this thing that has happened, I do not hold him at all to blame."

"You could not help him; if any one could have done so, I should have attempted it years ago. That Niall is some great man's son I am quite certain, though it must always remain impossible of proof."

"How is that?"

"He was the only living thing that was saved off the wreck of an East Indiaman twenty-two years ago. The woman who found him wished to keep him for her own, and denied his existence to all inquirers. Then she came to Inchmaree—to avoid questions, no doubt—and when she was dying she told me the truth in tardy remorse. But what could I do? She possessed nothing by which the child's identity could be proved. I did not know the name he had borne, knew nothing, in fact, but the name of the vessel."

"And what was that?"

"The Rajah."

Captain Ormsby started and looked after Niall's diminishing figure.

"It is a curious coincidence," he said. Then, after a long pause, "I shall certainly mention the matter to Tredegar."

On the evening of the next day, the Ormsbys left Inchmaree, the whole of them in remarkably bad temper. Mrs. Ormsby felt perfectly overwhelmed, ashamed of Edith, and hopeless of her; Captain Ormsby's mental attitude was a compound of wrath and scorn; while Edith, in a travelling dress that was the very perfection of neatness and daintiness, wore a cold expression on her pretty face, and felt almost angry. To be five-and-twenty years of age, yet treated always in this inconsequent way, as though she were a naughty child, it was too absurd. Carried here and carried there at a moment's notice, and scolded and wept over; only that she had the temper of an angel, she would not stand it. As to their remarks about her kindness to Niall, she treated them with the contempt they deserved. She wondered what Niall would think of her going off like this without a word to

him ; but possibly he would conclude that their interview yesterday meant farewell. She hated to seem rude, and never did so willingly, and her uncle and aunt were responsible in this as in many other cases. She had often warned them not to drive her to extremes, and they never minded her. Well, she would marry General Helston at once, just to escape from them ; and if the marriage turned out an unhappy one, she was perfectly sure she was not to blame.

The hired waggonette, with three sulky people inside, and a delighted maid on the box, was driven away from the pretentious, chill, unhomely house ; while Niall out at sea in the curragh, with the sculls lying idly at his feet, and his sad, stern face supported between his hands, was trying to find a reason for his own misery, and failing, as people always do, until the pain is over.

CHAPTER IV.

WINTER had come round again at Inchmaree ; the fishing boats were secured in a place of safety ; the fitful out-of-door activity of the summer was quite over ; most of the seafaring men were trying to turn their hands to odd and unaccustomed household jobs, while the women were knitting and stitching their hardest to eke out the common livelihood.

It was a somewhat stormy day, the wind came up in great billows from the ocean, carrying light scuds of foam with it, and salt flavours were abundant in every breath it gave. Yet for all that the atmosphere was not cold—bracing and sweet rather, for all its bluster.

Father Donovan was writing by a little table in front of the study window, making copious notes from a volume he was reading. The Priest was very fond of reading, and managed to get hold of new books now and then, even in this remote spot. Of course he only read the volumes which supported his views of theology or politics, not being anxious to distress himself needlessly.

On the window panes in front of him the dry salt borne up from the sea had formed itself into minute crystals, and he was absently admiring the shapes of singular grace they had taken, when the unexpected sound of wheels startled him, and looking out he saw that a hired fly had stopped at his door.

He pushed back his chair with a sense

of perturbation ; visitors were so rare here, in the winter time particularly, that he had grown rather to dread them as harbingers of misfortune.

The door bell rang sharply and imperiously, bringing out the maid-servant in a state of flurry. Father Donovan heard himself enquired for, and then the door of the plainly furnished little study was opened and the stranger entered.

He was a tall man, already a good deal past middle life, but with the erect bearing and quick eye of a soldier.

"Colonel Tredegar, at your service, sir," he said, taking off his travelling cap. "My friend, Captain Ormsby, told me to come and see you."

"Indeed !" The Priest seemed to freeze all over, as he always did at the name of Ormsby.

"You have a young man living with you, of whom they have spoken to me." He had seated himself at the Priest's invitation, and now he flung back the sleeve of his long cloak, and leant his arm heavily on the table beside him.

"What of him ?" with an ominous darkening of the face.

"I understand he was saved from the wreck of 'The Rajah.'"

"He was."

"My wife and child sailed from Calcutta in 'The Rajah' on her last voyage. I have reason to think this young man may be my son."

His voice was tremulous, and he wiped the dew from off his face as he spoke.

Father Donovan did not answer. He could not say that he felt surprised at the moment, he seemed to have expected this always, and to have been preparing for it.

"My son, if alive, is four-and-twenty now. He was little more than an infant, when I was ordered home from India : there was not time for his mother and him to accompany me, they followed me in 'The Rajah.'"

"The child was the only living thing that survived the wreck, but there were other children on board. How can you tell that this is yours ? There was nothing on his person by which he could be identified, and he has no recollection of anything that preceded his arrival here."

"Let me see him. If he is mine, I think I shall recognise him."

The Priest hesitated. Whatsoever was best for Niall was what he desired above all things, but—

"I understand you have treated him

very kindly. If he is my son, you will not find me ungrateful," Colonel Tredegar said with his intonation of natural superiority.

"I have done the best that I could for him, under the circumstances; but you know he has been brought up in quite a simple way, not as an officer's son should be, and I am half afraid he is not what you expect."

"Why?" sharply.

"Oh, I mean just what I say. If ever there was a white soul in a beautiful body, Niall has it; but, then, don't you see he is just a fisherman—and a Catholic, and you are not of his faith."

"Since we worship the same God, does the way in which we worship Him matter? As to his simple life, if he is a Tredegar, it has not harmed him. Can I see him?"

The Priest approached the door, but on the threshold he paused. "It will be better not to let him know anything till after you have talked with him," he said; then he went into another room and wept bitterly.

When he was left alone, Colonel Tredegar paced the little study in great agitation. After all these years, was the son of his youth to be given back to him, the child of that fair-haired woman who had been the one love of his life? He had a vision of bare baby arms, a sweet laughing mouth, and beautiful dark eyes looking out of a cherubic countenance. But the child was a man now, and untaught and coarsened by homely toil. His heart contracted. In that case, would he not be happier here, where fate had cast him, than in the great world where refinement can be cold at times, and courtesy cruel? What Father Donovan had suggested was wise, he would tell the young man nothing till he had talked with him.

But when the door opened and Niall entered, no way daunted, carrying himself like a Prince and wearing his fisher's dress as though it had been a royal robe, Colonel Tredegar forgot his caution.

"You are my son," he said, and burst into tears.

"It is quite the sensation of the season," pretty little Mrs. Helston said to her dear friend Lady Jane Pomfret, "and being one of the things that can never be decided beyond question, the interest will always continue. You know, everyone asks is he really Colonel Tredegar's son, though no one can ever positively assert that he is. Oh, they are alike, certainly, and the

young man is quite charming, so simple and sincere, a gentleman by nature, you know, and so remarkably handsome. As to educational deficiency, that is all rubbish, he knows a great deal more of what men talk of than they do, earned his bread by the fashionable amusements for years, and is so delightfully unsophisticated that he has not the least suspicion that he is a lion."

"You are enthusiastic," Lady Jane said with soft surprise. "Shall I tell General Helston?"

"Not if you expect to interest him. He lets me amuse myself, which shows his good judgement. As to Niall——"

"Do you mean Mr. Tredegar?"

"Yes—his father calls him Eric; but I shall always call him Niall—I believe he absolutely detests me. He does everything but cut me when we meet, bows in the chilliest way, and looks unutterably bored if I compel him to talk to me. Oh! I think it mean, when he has such lovely horses and such a splendid yacht, and could amuse me so perfectly."

"But is he not rather odd, a philanthropist, or something of that kind?" Lady Jane asked in her languid voice.

"No, I don't think so. He is said to spend a couple of months annually at Inchmaree, where he was brought up, and to give a fourth of his income to the old Priest there for charitable purposes; but that is all. And to think that, but for me, he would have been a rustic there yet! I went to the place and found him, and restored him to his father, and yet he will scarcely speak to me. It just shows that gratitude is as extinct as an Irish elk."

And Mrs. Helston closes her fan with a vicious little snap, gives her hand to an adoring and beardless youth in evening dress, and is whirled down the West End ballroom to the music of "Sweethearts," while a white-haired old general, whose dancing days are long over, looks after her wistfully.

"NO!"

By B. DEMPSTER.

Author of "*Mrs. Silas B. Bunthorp*," "*Royal*," "*The Lady of Dis*," etc. etc.

CHAPTER I.

"AND do you sit on high three-legged stools with your feet on the mantel-piece?" she asked, looking at him with deepest interest. She was sitting in a comfortable

chair on the deck of the American man-of-war. It was one of those chairs which make an awkward woman look doubly awkward, but only throw into more exquisite lines every beauty of a graceful one. The afternoon sun, too, which was pouring down in a blaze of almost intolerable heat on the harbour, was here softened by an awning, which only allowed the tenderest of warm lights, to fall on her face and smiling eyes.

She looked so intensely bewitching under these circumstances of becoming chair and subdued sunshine, that the young American Lieutenant forgot to answer, and only gazed at her as he sat balanced, in anything but a secure position, on a rickety chair.

"And drink cocktails and things!" she went on again.

"The Captain won't let us—sit on three-legged stools, I mean. There are one or two kicking about. He doesn't object so much to the cocktails," with an odd note in his voice which she did not notice.

"What a shame! Why won't he let you have them?"

"They're awfully comfortable. But the Captain doesn't think it looks well—discipline and all that, you know. I say! There's the music! Give me this dance, Miss Keith?"

He bent eagerly forward, so eagerly that he lost the very precarious balance he had, and in his effort to recover himself, came with a crash to the deck, sprawling at her feet.

"What did you do that for?" she asked gravely, as he sprang up with the agility of a sailor, from among the ruins of the chair.

"I don't know, I am sure," he answered, perfectly indifferent to the ludicrous figure he had cut, and coolly gathering up the remnants of the chair, which he carried to the side of the ship and dropped overboard. "I only know," he said, coming back to her, "that when I was there I wanted to stay there."

He laughed a genuine, pleasant laugh; but his eyes were full of the most unmistakable admiration as he looked down at her. He had only met her two hours before; but those two hours had done marvels in changing the tenour of Mr. Maynard Ensoll's hitherto love-indifferent life. With her woman's eyes she read the look. She made a slight, impatient gesture; but the next second she was smiling up at him again.

"You would soon tire of being at a

woman's feet. I can just fancy you longing for a cigar, and a good run to ease your cramped limbs."

"I guess you don't know. But I don't want metaphors, I want a dance."

"I'm not going to dance any more. I threw my programme overboard."

All the couples who had been sitting and straying about near them, were flocking back to the dancing. She had refused them so persistently all the afternoon that none of the men came near her again. It was such a decided case for the young American Lieutenant—she having only danced with him—that they, after the fashion of the generality of men, not wishing to poach in another's waters, left him at last in undisturbed possession.

For a moment or two there was silence between them. He sat looking at her quite oblivious of the fact, in the intensity of his interest, that it was not polite to stare at a lady. She, languidly fanning herself, gazing in a dreamy, far-off way across the beautiful harbour, which has something so foreign in its picturesque buildings and red-roofed houses. Great men-of-war; white-painted troop-ships, with tiny cockle-shells of boats; and noisy, black-smoking steam-launches, rushing in and out, in bewildering, dangerous-looking confusion; covered the hot, sparkling waters. The hoarse cries of boatmen and sailors were softened into harmony in the sunny, drowsy expanse of air and sea. There was no breeze, either from the land or from the sea, whose breast rose and fell beyond the harbour bar as gently as that of some sleeping child's. The heat had been quite a fruitful topic of conversation that afternoon to dancers who had a difficulty on the subject of ideas, and to partners personally totally indifferent to each other.

Yet suddenly she shivered—with a violent, uncontrollable shudder, as if with cold—and her face grew pinched and blue.

"What is the matter?" he asked in quick alarm.

"I don't know." She turned to him again, smiling, but her lips were stiff, and only forced into that smile. "I am cold, I think."

"Cold! I wish I were! You must be ill to be cold. Come downstairs and have some tea."

She rose, and they made their way to the companion, down which he carefully helped her. The refreshments, set out in lavish profusion, were being served on the lower deck.

Miss Keith only took a few sips of the tea, and then, at his suggestion, they strolled over towards the mess-room where it was dusky and deserted. She sat down on a chair he brought her.

"Are all your officers here?" she asked.

"No!" regretfully. "Our First Lieutenant is absent—Grant—George W. Grant. We call him our 'Beauty.' He and I are old chums. I'll show you his photo, if you like. But of course you wouldn't like," a faint flush of shame at his eagerness dyeing his face. But he and George W. Grant had been friends since their school-days. He was not a bit handsome himself, though pleasant-looking, with his strong well-built frame, and his uniform showed him off to advantage; but he had never felt a pang of jealousy as yet against his friend, who had on more than one occasion "cut him out." "It wouldn't matter to you if he had 'carrots' and three noses."

"It would make his photograph a most interesting study any way. Please show it to me."

His cabin was close by, and as eager to amuse her as to show off his friend, he moved away to fetch the photograph. She sat waiting for him. There was something motionless, rather than reposeful, in the languor of her position, and her face took the same pinched blue look of mortal cold it had worn on the upper deck.

"Here it is, Miss Keith."

She took the leather-framed portrait with languid, fashionable indifference, and looked at it.

"He's a splendid-looking chap, isn't he?" he asked with proud affection.

"It's a very fine frame," she said.

He broke into his frank, pleasant laugh.

"I say, Miss Keith, that is crushing! Why, he's our show man—we're not a particularly good-looking set; in fact, I heard one girl at Plymouth call us Charon's crew. Her friend—an awfully pretty little girl—suggested Grant was Orpheus being rowed across the river Styx in that ugly old gentleman's ferry-boat. Not bad, was it?"

"I thought Charon rowed about all by himself," said Miss Keith, with thoughtful slowness, still looking at the portrait in her hands. "Did he have a crew?"

"Oh! I'm sure I don't know! I never was up in the classics. Any way, that old Charon was enough by himself. Besides, Grant is not in search of his wife," with an amused tone in his laugh which had something significant in it.

Perhaps she noticed it, for she looked up at him, with that slow, languid glance, which some called the pink of affection, and others the most bewitching grace in the world. He was one of the latter.

"Ah! well," he said, answering it because he could not help himself, "it isn't any thing very much, only—our Captain has a lovely little niece about sixteen. All our men are mad about her—but we are all poor—and—well, you see, Grant is so good-looking that the Captain thinks he is just as well on this side of the Atlantic."

"I don't like your Captain," she said.

The young man did not answer; or, rather the answer he made, apparently a quite irrelevant one, was eloquent:

"Have another cup of tea, or a cocktail?"

She laughed, and gave him back the photograph. When he returned from replacing it in his cabin, he found her talking to her chaperone. They were going; he accompanied them on to the upper deck. All the guests were thronging towards the gangway. The American officers stood among them helping them down into the pinnaces that were to take them ashore, or back to other ships.

"I am so sorry you are going!" exclaimed the Lieutenant abruptly.

"Are you?" She looked up at him with a look that startled him.

It was so searching, so appealing, so pitiful, so hopeless. But she turned away swiftly to hurry after Mrs. Maynard, leaving him bewildered.

Captain Stock caught sight of him, and told him he might go with the pinnace. He liked the young man as well as he could like any one under his command. He, like the rest, had been amused at his devotion that afternoon to the pretty Miss Keith. He admired her himself, and on occasions such as these would be sympathetic as well as hospitable. Mr. Maynard Ensoll leaped down on to the pinnace, not needing another command. From where he stood he could see her apparently chattering and laughing as gaily as the rest of the crowd.

"What could it mean?" he asked himself in utter perplexity. "One would think I could help her in some way." He tried to catch her eye again, but she never once looked in the direction where he stood. The instant the pinnace reached the landing-stage he hurried forward to help the ladies off.

It came to her turn.

For a moment her hand lay in his. She looked up at him, thanking him again with a bright smile for the "lovely afternoon they had all given them."

And yet he would have sworn that behind the smile lurked the dark shadow he had seen in her eyes a few moments before. Under some sudden impulse he answered the shadow, not the smile.

"If ever I can do anything for you, ask me!" he whispered hurriedly, his strong, steady hand clasping closely round hers.

Then she passed on in the stream of pretty girls and smiling women, all making flattering little speeches to him as he assisted them on shore. He answered without really knowing what he was saying.

Was she offended at his audacity? His speech now seemed a piece of such unwarrantable impertinence.

But as the pinnacle steamed off again, she stepped out from among the little group of people standing on the shore, and looked after the retreating launch—at him!

With a quick leaping of his pulses, he raised his cap, giving it a little triumphal wave of salute high over his head.

CHAPTER II.

"It's a darned shame!"

The speaker, George W. Grant, First Lieutenant on board the "Plymouth," looked as if he meant it.

Mr. Maynard Ensoll, sitting on the table in the mess-room, his hands thrust deep in his pockets, his legs dangling impatiently to and fro, looked as if he quite agreed.

"Stock is an infernal——"

"I oughtn't to have spoken," interrupted Ensoll rather wearily, but roused to a sense of discipline by the wrathful, fiery eyes of his friend, "only——"

"You couldn't help it—I should think not! It makes a man sick to see his bullying. He's a drunken——"

"Shut up!" Grant's reckless, fiery spirit made Ensoll more careful for his friend than he was for himself.

Grant paced restlessly up the room and back again. If he could, at that moment, have taken his Captain by the throat and shaken the breath half out of him, he would have been grateful. Only unfortunately, the plan was not feasible, and he had enough control over himself as yet to understand the good sense of his friend's advice.

"Well, old boy, I must be off!" he said, as he reached Ensoll again. "Can I give any messages? I hear you've been running it hard!" with an amused laugh.

Ensoll winced. It was a fortnight since their own dance, and he had certainly been "running it hard." He raised his eyes, which were dimly contemplating his feet stretched out now on to the back of the seat before him, and looked at his friend instead. Grant was splendidly handsome, with that generous brightness of anger still lingering in his eyes, its flush on his face. Ensoll remembered suddenly how long she had looked at his portrait that day; how interested she had since been in everything concerning him that he—Ensoll—had told her. And with a curious sensation, curious because he had never felt it before, he remembered, too, how much he had told her. But the sensation passed as quickly as it came, almost before he had time to be troubled by it. It passed in a sudden anxiety for the man who had excited it.

"What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I don't know. Perhaps I'll look in at the Princess's dance. Stock was slanging me this morning because I haven't been seen 'in decent company yet,' with a grim laugh. "And then Gardiner has asked me to dine with him to-night. I shall take my things ashore and draw there."

"I wish you'd cut Gardiner," said Ensoll impatiently, but with an anxious look in his eyes. "I believe he's a regular card-sharper."

The other flushed half-angrily, half-shamefacedly.

"You mind your own business," he said gruffly, and yet not unkindly. "Do you think me a fool? I gave you my word I wouldn't play high; that ought to be enough for you."

Ensoll tumbled off his uncomfortable perch without another word. Grant was a born gambler at heart. This evil propensity was one of the causes given by Captain Stock for his anger against him when he, a poor Lieutenant, had had the presumption to fall in love with his lovely little niece, Mirabella Stock. He was an inveterate foe to gambling himself, and opposed it with all his might among his men and officers. Ensoll had done his best to keep his friend out of the pale of his displeasure. He had even lately persuaded him to give him his word not

to play high. As he could not have broken his own, he was satisfied with his friend's now. His own woes soon made him forget even his anxiety for Grant's hot temper and the well-known hate existing between him and his Captain.

For a whole fortnight not to have a chance of seeing Miss Keith! He had incurred, the day before, the wrath of Captain Stock, and in consequence had to suffer for it by having his leave stopped for a whole fortnight. It did not make the sentence any lighter to know that the punishment, from a disciplinary point of view, was perfectly just, and that, if it had been passed on any other man, it would have been harder.

This suspension of all intercourse between himself and Miss Keith was intolerable. Since that first afternoon they had met nearly every day. Though never once again had he caught a glimpse of that strange look, yet, in some subtle way, it seemed to have become the foundation of a friendship, which, outwardly only an amusing flirtation, was something very much more real. He had no doubt about his own feelings on the subject; and there was some kindness and tenderness underlying her bright society manner, which he felt without being able to analyse, and which filled him with the most glorious delight of hope.

No! she could not be playing with him. They called her a desperate flirt—a dangerous, heartless coquette—it had even been at first hinted once or twice in his hearing, that she was fast, "bad form," in her reckless indifference to appearances. But he found her all that was good, and womanly, and sweet. How he wished now he had sent her a message by Grant! What foolish, false reticence it had been, which kept him back from even mentioning her name to his old friend!

He wondered, as the long hot hours of the afternoon wore on, what Grant would think of her. They would be sure to meet at the Princess's that afternoon. Grant had only returned from leave three days before; he had been staying in town with Gardiner, who had chambers in London.

Though Grant had been ashore, he had spent most of his time with Gardiner, who had come down to Southsea with him. Neither of the two had appeared at any of the social entertainments going on in the place. Grant, who had once been the most pleasure-loving young fellow in the

world, seemed, since his last love-affair, to have taken a disgust to society.

It was late that night when Grant returned. The two men did not have any opportunity of speaking to each other till the next morning.

The first glance at Grant told Ensoll that something was wrong. His thoughts immediately flew to Gardiner.

"How did you like the 'hop'?" he asked, as he leant over the bulwarks looking down at the water, which reflected the dazzling blue of the morning sky. He did not see, therefore, the faint start his friend gave, nor how red the pale, tired face flushed.

"Oh! the hop!" after a second's pause, rousing himself apparently from some other train of thought. "It was well enough. Heaps of pretty little girls. Very hot and crowded, though."

"What did you think of Miss Keith?" plunging boldly to the point, seeing no other way of turning the conversation to her.

"She's good-looking," with a languid slowness, which sounded utter indifference.

"Good-looking!" indignantly, standing upright. "She's out and out the loveliest girl here!"

A strange, startled, and yet curiously understanding look came into Grant's eyes, as he looked into his friend's eager face.

"I say, Ensoll, they told me, you know—" he broke off abruptly, and turned away. "She's the girl you've been going in for, isn't she?"

Ensoll's face flushed hotly, and then his lips seemed to pale a little, for there was something behind his friend's speech.

"What were you going to say?" he asked.

"Oh! I don't know; only I think it is rather a mistake," Grant said in a curious, composed way. "They all say so."

"Grant!" Ensoll laid his hand on his shoulder, compelling him to turn, so that he should see his face. He spoke quite quietly, but it was not natural.

"Why is it a mistake?"

"Oh!—well, she is a desperate flirt and—and—I heard——"

"You don't know what you are saying. If you are going to repeat any of that miserable slander to me, you'd better clear out. It's all the basest jealousy. She's the sweetest, truest, purest girl I have ever met, and I'd lay down my life to prove her faith!"

His voice which had gradually risen into

indignant reproach, ended in a note of the most perfect, triumphant confidence and gladness.

He turned on his heel and walked across the deck, hardly conscious yet of how much his words and manner had betrayed. Grant stood looking after him quite stupidly. Ensoll had been perfectly right when he had told him that he did not know what he was saying. He had said something. But what it was, he could not tell now. Only it must have been something, in answer to that proud, eager look on his friend's face. He had heard yesterday all about the desperate flirtation between Ensoll and Miss Keith. Yet he had forgotten it till this moment. He had gone through such a furnace of mental anguish, such a storm of remorse, and helpless rage, and desperate fear, that all else had been scorched up in their fires. But it all came back to him now.

CHAPTER III.

THE long weary fortnight had come to its end. Ensoll, restlessly pacing the deck, the last afternoon of his detention, looked curiously different to the laughing-eyed young man who had danced there with such happy carelessness a month ago. But it was not the love-thirst of his heart which had brought those set lines to his mouth and quenched the old brightness of his eyes.

"It's a shame, the way Grant is cutting Ensoll out," said one midshipman to another as they looked at him. They were both in a bad temper, having to stay on board that lovely afternoon, and being devoted admirers of Ensoll, they were inclined to be abusive of his friend and Captain alike. "Grant knew Ensoll was gone on her. I call it caddish, now that Ensoll is out of the running. Grant and she are always together."

The other fully concurred. Ensoll had gathered from various things let slip in conversation what was taking place on shore.

Grant himself had never alluded to Miss Keith, and Ensoll was too proud to ask. But the fierce pain at his heart would fill him at moments with rage against Grant, for trying to step between himself and Miss Keith. Only for a momentary, careless amusement. For what else could it be? Grant had not forgotten Mirabella Stock. Even he, Ensoll, sceptic as he had been on the subject of his friend's powers

of devotion, really believed at last in his love and fidelity where Mirabella was concerned. He knew how his unfortunate passion had changed his whole life.

The Grant of to-day was no more like the Grant of a year before, than a happy, careless schoolboy is like the man who comes out hardened, reckless, bitter, from life's great battle. Yet here he was, idly flirting with Phoebe Keith—when he knew that her love was the life's happiness of his friend. For Ensoll was certain that Grant knew that he loved her.

As he thought it over to-day, he felt he could keep silence no longer; he would speak to Grant that night, when he returned to the ship from the Admiral's ball, where probably he would have danced all night with Phoebe!

In the pale light of the early summer dawn, Ensoll found his opportunity.

"I want to speak to you," he said curtly.

"All right, old boy," answered Grant carelessly, but he leant back heavily against the side of the ship, gazing across the silent harbour, with its gleaming lights and dark ships which looked like ghostly shadows in the morning twilight, and it seemed as if he did it, to avoid meeting his friend's eyes.

"Is it all up with you and Mirabella Stock?"

Grant's strong frame quivered from head to foot, as if the pitiless, curt question had stabbed him through.

Then he answered slowly.

"It was all up long ago."

"Do you mean, then, to marry Miss Keith?"

"Marry her!" he broke into a harsh, discordant laugh. "Not much chance of my doing that!"

"Then will you—in Heaven's name, tell me——"

But a sudden, swift change leapt into Grant's eyes. His whole face was convulsed with fury.

"Will you tell me by what unwarrantable impertinence you question my affairs? Let me pass, and be hanged to you!"

Ensoll, thrust aside, stood quite still. Something seemed suddenly to have snapped within him. Something that set his whole life jarring and clashing out of tune. It made him quite dizzy, as if the discord were physical. Trust, faith, tender affection, respect, were being crushed, maimed, slain, amid the mad, wild confusion of those other raging feelings.

The friendship which had begun so long

ago, which had lasted so faithfully, which had been the controlling power, keeping in beautiful harmony so many opposing feelings, purposes, aims, tastes, was dead.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. DURRANT was giving an "at home" the next day.

Her rooms were already crowded when the Americans managed to wedge their way into them. Ensoll gave an eager glance about him, and then his heart seemed to stop beating, and he knew no more till he found himself standing a little apart, with Phœbe Keith.

"You have been behaving very badly to us!" she said, laughing off the dumb, pitiful appeal of his great love looking at her from his eyes. But she had paled too. He tried to return a smiling reply, but the smile died abruptly on his lips, as, recovering his senses a little, he was shocked at the change in her.

"How awfully ill you look!"

"Don't stare at me like that," she exclaimed pettishly; "and for goodness sake don't tell me I am not looking well. I know that is always only a polite way of telling a girl that she is growing ugly! Now I must go and look after the people. Shall I introduce you to any one? But I suppose you know plenty of girls. Come and take me to get some tea presently."

She turned away; there were some fresh arrivals. Mrs. Durrant was just greeting them, near the doorway. There was a small, empty space between them and Miss Keith and Ensoll.

As Miss Keith turned from him towards the door, Mrs. Durrant caught sight of her.

"Oh! there is one of my young friends," she said to the lady who with her two daughters had just entered. "Phœbe, dear, come here, and I will introduce you to Lady Marland. I want you to look after her daughters."

Miss Keith advancing, suddenly stopped. Lady Marland was staring at her with such a look of petrified amazement, horror, disgust, that everybody near turned to look at her too.

"Thank you, Mrs. Durrant!" Lady Marland found her voice at last. It was clear in its unutterable indignation, and reached half through the crowded rooms. "I would rather my daughters were not introduced to that young person. Why, my dear," dropping her voice and

flushing faintly at the scene she had been involuntarily betrayed into making, "do you know that she was living—why! there is the man!"

One or two sitting and standing near, caught distinctly the lowered accents. Among them Ensoll, who, at Lady Marland's first words, with one swift stride had stepped to Phœbe's side. He, with all the others, looked towards the doorway.

Grant had not come with his brother officers. He stood there now, having just arrived.

He had apparently heard everything, for his face was white to the lips, and there was a curious, dazed look in his eyes.

Phœbe Keith, as she caught sight of him, made one step forward, looking up at him with surely the most pitiful, anguished appeal that ever looked out from a woman's eyes.

He met it with that same dazed, unresponsive gaze, and then, in a kind of stumbling, awkward way, made a half turn as if to go away.

A violent shudder shook Phœbe from head to foot, and then, with a sudden uplifting of her head, a straightening into splendid, queenly dignity of her shrinking figure, she turned, and walking swiftly through another door, vanished from among the gazing, wondering, horrified crowd of fashionable pleasure-seekers. Ensoll glanced at the other door; Grant had fled too.

There was a breathless, silent pause, pregnant with unspoken questions and answers, then everybody began talking all at once: some to spare the feelings of their unfortunate hostess in her awkward situation; some to express their certainty that they knew something like this would turn up with regard to Miss Keith; others to deny the possibility of there being anything true in it.

In a few minutes everybody in the room had some version of the scene. Lady Marland, vexed at her position, and yet feeling that she had done quite right in exposing the girl, told what she knew to Mrs. Durrant, who was divided between horror, doubt, tears, and anger. Two years ago, Lady Marland had been staying in America at an hotel where these two were also putting up. They gave themselves out as man and wife. But various things made the other people suspicious, and their suspicions were one day confirmed when the young person who now

called herself Miss Keith, gave out distinctly to an old gentleman who happened to turn up there one day, and who, it appeared, was a relation of the gentleman with her, that she was not his wife. Lady Maraland had seen or heard nothing of her since, till to-day. How was it that Mrs. Durrant had made the acquaintance of such a person?

Mrs. Durrant only knew her as the companion and adopted daughter of a friend of hers living in the north of Ireland.

This lady was very fond of her, and had made her take her own name. Miss Keith, or whatever her name was, had lived with her for two years, and she believed this lady knew her before that.

But Ensoll had waited for no explanations. He had rushed from the house like a man driven by a legion of devils. With burning eyes and parched lips, he walked blindly on, his heart a very hell of consuming fire, fed by the ever-growing flames of hate, fury, and lust of revenge. His brain was too confused to form any plan of vengeance. The desire of it only burned there at his heart. The anguish of it was horrible. It must find voice and fulfilment soon, or he felt it would kill him. But as yet he could not think it out clearly. Physically and mentally he was prostrated, and his helplessness added to the torment. Not to be able to carry out vengeance before all those other men came back to the ship that afternoon with their talk, their—it cut like a scourge on quivering, bare flesh—their scoffs, their jests upon her!

But when his brother officers did return, they said not a word. Perhaps his face silenced them; perhaps they felt all the pity and shame of it, for they all knew the great friendship that had been between the two men, and how well Ensoll had learned to love her. Popular as Grant had been, there was one universal word of disgust at the cowardice he had betrayed that afternoon, for the piteous appeal in the girl's eyes had been seen by many. Captain Stock was up in town. They wondered what he would say when he returned on the morrow. Even Mirabella, who was known to have cared for the handsome Lieutenant, and braved her uncle's wrath for his sake, would turn in horror from him now.

Grant did not return to the ship that night. His absence without leave was freely commented upon, out of Ensoll's

hearing. This would be the last stroke, as far as Stock was concerned.

"And then he's been fooling around with that fellow Gardiner, too, just lately. Playing recklessly this last fortnight, he's lost a pile," said one, to wind up the many things that had at last placed Grant into the hands of his enemy. For they all knew that Stock would prove an implacable judge, and that, to bring about the ruin of Grant, had long been the earnest desire of his vindictive heart.

Next morning Ensoll went ashore. He found Grant at the hotel which he frequented. Ensoll had hardly expected to find him there. He only went to get information. Ensoll entered his room without knocking. He shut the door after him, turning the key in the lock. Grant, who was sitting smoking near the open window, had started to his feet. Neither spoke for a moment.

Then Ensoll, advancing into the room, said in a slow, hoarse voice:

"I want an explanation of yesterday."

Grant's face grew paler.

"She is my wife," he said.

"Your wife!"

Ensoll recoiled. The room seemed to reel round him. "Your wife! Why then——"

"I married her about two years ago. Do you remember that time I went to Cincinnati? I met her there and fell in love with her, and married her. In two months I had tired of her. I found out I had never even loved her. It was her beauty, I suppose." He spoke in a strange monotonous tone, as if repeating something learned by heart. "I kept the marriage secret. You know that old uncle of mine! I was afraid of him. I had been playing high, and wanted his money. But I did not love her," he went on again, "though she did for me what costs a woman more than we can ever measure. To save me, she pretended she was not my wife. She loved me well enough for that; and yet—I—. There have been times during the last year when I have almost hated her!"

"You despicable coward! And yesterday, when she appealed to you to save her—you were silent—you——"

"Ensoll!" He put out his hands as if to ward off Ensoll, who had stepped forward. "If you struck me—I could not explain—and—I swear to you that for a moment yesterday I was half dazed. I thought of nothing. I could only see Mirabella. As that woman spoke the whole

sense of my loss fell upon me. I could realise nothing else. I did not even see —my wife. When I recovered, she had gone. But, Ensoll, I swear to you I have made it all right this morning. I have written to Mrs. Durrant——"

"You have not seen—your wife—yet?"

"No, Ensoll. I am not quite so lost as you think. I can't face her yet. That other will come between——"

"And yet you could let that other learn to love you while——"

Grant's lips twitched with a sudden spasm of remorse and pain.

"I did try at first to keep away from her; but I went mad at last; and it was only one week in which I gave way, one short week, and now——"

Ensoll turned from him in unutterable anger and loathing. He seemed so base, this man he had once loved so well.

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know. If Phœbe will let me, I will try and redeem the past."

But there was no life in the words or tone. They were inexpressibly dreary and hopeless; he was still thinking most of that other girl.

A knock at the door broke the strained silence between them. Grant went over and opened it, taking a note from the waiter who had brought it. He read it, then crushed it in his hand, a sharp exclamation breaking from him.

"What is it?" Ensoll, moved by the ashen pallor of Grant's face, asked hastily, sick with fear that something worse had befallen Phœbe.

The only answer Grant gave, was to toss him the letter across the table.

It was from Gardiner.

"DEAR GRANT,—

"I am leaving for India to-morrow, as you know. I shall be glad if you would kindly square up to-day. I am sorry I cannot wait, but I really must have the cash. Yours,

"HERBERT GARDINER."

A civil note in a way; but those who knew the man felt the merciless grip of the iron hand which had penned the words. Ensoll understood all in a moment. He had heard of the high play that had been going on. Grant, growing reckless, had broken his word.

Indeed, the misery of his position, the contempt of his own cowardice, had driven him into the arms of his old vice. Last night, after that meeting with the wife he had so injured, half mad as he felt, he had

plunged more recklessly than ever into the excitement of play. In the light of the summer dawn, he had risen from the gaming table with nothing between him and disgrace.

Gardiner had told him that he should have time to pay his debts of honour. This letter proved what his mercy was worth.

The letter fluttered from Ensoll's hand on to the table. The gesture was significant. Grant felt it to the quick of his soul.

"Ensoll!" he exclaimed hoarsely, "I am sunk too low for you ever to take notice of me again—and yet I must sink still lower! I have done you a great wrong—all unwittingly, Heaven knows. When the men chaffed you about her, I never suspected that Miss Keith was—my wife! She had changed her name, you know. When I found it out, I thought it was about the last stroke a man could bear. I hadn't the courage to speak. But now, for the sake of the old friendship, for her sake, if you will, for my disgrace will be hers, help me now. I swear that you shall not regret it. I will repay every cent. I will strive as man never strove before to become an honest man. Give me this one step up, lest I go down body and soul into infamy."

Ensoll had walked over to the window. He stood looking out across the common, over which hung a wavering mist of heat. The Marine Artillery were marching past in the distance; the music of their band reached him. He recalled the day when it had played at their own dance—the first day he and she had met.

Grant's voice, so close to him, seemed only like some far-off sound. It was the distant music that was wrapping him in, setting all his pulses quivering, kindling into fire the blood in his veins.

Yet he heard something of what Grant was saying, for he was thinking vaguely all the time his pulses were beating out the time of that music, of the large sum of money he had lying in a London bank.

Of course Grant's talk of repaying it was all nonsense. How could he? A year ago—no, a month ago—Ensoll would have signed the cheque, knowing that its repayment was as impossible as that the stones on the shore should become gold. But such a gift would have been but a trifle to save his friend's honour. Would not he have laid down his life for it? Afterwards, he supposed he must have

thought all these things, for they came back to him with a strange and dreadful familiarity.

But at this moment he was only really conscious of the music and the picture it conjured up. The girl leaning forward in her low chair on the deck, smiling up into his eyes. He saw every graceful line of the lovely figure; every turn of the dainty head; every smile, now tender, now disdainful, of the lips.

"Maynard, for the sake of the past——"

Ensoll turned round.

"No!" he said.

Then he passed him, and went out of his presence for always.

When the news was brought to him a little later, his brother officers were startled, almost shocked at his demeanour.

When they received the message that Grant was dead—shot by his own hand—about half-an-hour after Ensoll had left him, they felt that they could fling no more stones of reproach, contempt, or anger at him. Whatever his sins, they had met with a reckoning which made men afraid to utter their earthly judgements.

A cloud of gloom rested upon all the ship; Grant had been very popular. Even if he had not been, such an end, coming to one who had dwelt in their midst, would have sobered them, and there was everything in this to darken and sadden the case.

But Captain Stock, furious at the disgrace of the whole affair—of the gambling, the secret marriage, the insult done his niece—raged and stormed until they all could scarcely bear it. There was something horrible and ghastly in the volley of oaths and abuse flung over the dead, senseless body of their late comrade.

It was then that they wondered still more how Ensoll could stand by and listen—cold, impassive, silent.

But into his soul had gone the iron of that "No!"

Never to leave him free again from its wound. It was to chasten every joy, deepen every pain of his after life. It was to be the shadow cast by earthly love; to be the weariness of fulfilled ambitions; the fear of his strong manhood; the remorse of his old age.

A "No" to live on till the Day of Judgement, when he and that friend—whose murderer he counted himself—should meet and touch each other's hands again, forgiving and forgiven!

A PREVENTIVE YARN.

By FRANK ABELL.

Author of "The Black Diamonds," etc.

CHAPTER I.

"Poor leetle Engleesh boy!"

"Hullo! Do you speak English?"

"Oh, yes! My fader, he live long time in Engleesh prison holk."

"Prison what?"

"Prison holk. One great ship all full of Frenchmans."

"I like you; you're a nice little girl."

"And I like you; you poor leetle Engleesh boy."

This conversation took place one bright May morning, in the year 1781, in the shady orchard of an old farm-house, situated in the outskirts of Calais. The first speaker was a black-eyed, black-haired little French girl of eight; the other was a square-built, yellow-haired, blue-eyed little English boy, a couple of years her senior. One of those fragile palisades, which in France so often do duty for walls and fences, separated them, and for some minutes the quaint pair had been eyeing one another through the fence, ere the conversation above recorded opened.

Only two days before, the "Fancy Lass," of Rye, bound for the West Indies, had become separated from her convoy, had been captured by the "Diane," French frigate, towed into Calais harbour, and her Captain, John Garden, with his crew of ten men shut up in the old Fort.

Captain Garden had taken his wife and little boy with him to sea, for at this period we were better accustomed to capture than be captured, and he imagined that in so doing he ran little risk. But Mrs. Garden, a woman in delicate health, had succumbed to the fright and over-excitement caused by the chase, and the poor Captain shuddered to think that his youngster was doomed to share the horrors of a French prison hulk with him.

But Madame Denise, a French mother, who witnessed the arrival of the English prisoners, and who perhaps had a son of her own fighting his country's battles abroad, or languishing in an English prison, took pity on the motherless boy, and obtained permission to take him with her to her farm outside Calais; and Captain Garden, although unwilling to part, even temporarily, with the last home-tie left to him,

knew that the step was a right one, and so said good-bye to the little fellow.

The ice thus broken by the two little neighbours, it was the easiest thing in the world to go on.

"Little French girl, what's your name?" asked the boy.

"My name Olive," replied missy.

"Olive what?"

The girl gazed at him and shook her head.

"Only got one name!" exclaimed the youngster. "Poor little French girl! I've got two—Jack Garden. But Olive's a very pretty name. How old are you?"

"I have—one, two, tree—eight years," replied Olive.

"Oh, you're quite young then! I'm ten," said Jack, and swaggered about with all the importance which two years' seniority gave him, whilst the little girl watched him with big, admiring eyes. Suddenly he stopped short and said:

"Come and play!"

No second invitation was necessary, and in a very few minutes Olive had disappeared and re-appeared on Jack's side of the palisade, and during that bright May morning there were probable not two happier human beings in or out of Calais.

The game of play became a daily institution, and in course of time the two became inseparable. Madame Denise too and the neighbours around took a strong fancy to the English lad, although he had to fight his way amongst the patriotic young natives, and nearly broke Olive's heart one day by appearing with a tattered jacket and only one serviceable eye.

Now and then his father, under escort, was allowed to come to the farm and see Jack; but one day Madame Denise called the boy to her room and told him sad news from the Port. The French cruisers had been more than usually fortunate, and there were now more than two thousand English sailors stowed away in the prison ships and the casemates of the old Fort. Consequently, typhus fever broke out, the prisoners died by scores, and amongst them Captain Garden, so that little Jack was left an orphan in a strange land.

Of course the news saddened the boy very much; but grief falls lightly on young shoulders, and Olive consoled him so tenderly, that he soon came to regard her as the centre of his little world, and made up his mind that nothing was to separate them. They almost lived together; did their lessons

together; took long walks together over the wind-swept sand-dunes, or into the quaint old town, or amongst the shipping. Or they would go to the jetty to hear the last news of the war, and never even disagree about this, for Olive thought far more of her sturdy little English companion than of patriotism, and looked as pleased as he did when he sung out "Hooray!" at the news of Johnstone's victory over Suffrein at Saint Jago, and shared his depression when the firing of guns and the display of bunting announced the capture of another English prize.

And so a couple of months passed, and the children's life at the farm-house was unallied by a single unhappiness or misfortune.

But one evening as Jack was seated in the orchard alone, carving a miniature "Fancy Lass," and shouting at the top of his voice a favourite song of his dead father's,

'Twas when the sea was roarin'
With hollow blasts of wind,
A damsel lay deplorin'
All on a rock reclin'd,

he was surprised to see the figure of a man creeping stealthily along in the dusk by the row of currant bushes which bounded one side of the orchard. His first impulse was to sing out for help, as in these troublous times the neighbourhoods of sea-port towns were infested by all sorts of bad characters; but the man by a swift movement came up to him, and he recognised Ned Tunstall, first mate of the "Fancy Lass."

"Why, Ned, what's brought you here?" whispered the boy, as he saw by the sailor's gesture that silence was imperative.

"Never you mind, Master Jack," was the reply. "I ain't got no time to spin you no yarns just now. Every minute's wallible, and the moon will be up soon. We've got to go, so don't axe no questions."

"Go, Ned! Where?" asked Jack.

"Why, away, sure-ly," replied Ned, "out of this 'ere blessed country. Away to sea again, and arter a bit to Old England."

"But I don't want to go, Ned," said Jack, who shuddered at the thought of parting with Olive.

"Not want to go!" exclaimed the amazed mariner, who was utterly unable to comprehend the wish of any born Englishman to be anywhere else but in England.

"No," repeated Jack. "Father and mother are dead, and I'm so happy here; and I love Olive so much and everyone

is so kind to me. I needn't go, Ned, need I?"

"You come along, sir," replied Ned. "This ain't no place for a young genelman like you to be in, let alone an Englishman of any sort. So here's a packet, sir, which the poor skipper said was to be given to the kind lady here: it's got money in it and a letter."

"Very well, Ned," said Jack sadly, "but you'll let me go and say good-bye to Olive, won't you? She will give Madame the packet."

"Don't be long, sir," said Ned, "we've a tidy way to go before the moon rises."

At that moment Olive came bounding into the garden. She stopped short when she saw Jack in conversation with a big, bearded man, but the sailor beckoned to her, saying:

"Come along, missy, I see it all. Master Jack's got to go away, away home. But you'll see him again some day, sartin sure, as it's a werry small world."

"Jack going away!" repeated the girl slowly three or four times; "but he doesn't want to go, and he is so good here."

"Yes, Olive, I'd better go," said the little fellow resolutely. "You see I couldn't stay here for always, could I?"

"Why not?" said Olive. "Your fader is dead, and your moder also—and I wish I was! Oh, you must not go, Jack. No, no! Please, let him stop, Mr. Sailor."

"Can't be," said the mate kindly. "Master Jack's a genelman, you see, and there's his friends at home; and his—but lor! what's the use o' my parlarvering away about what you can't understand? So say good-bye, miss, please, and come along, Master Jack."

Jack obeyed mechanically. He could not say anything, for there was a lump in his throat, and his heart was full to bursting. But he threw his arms around Olive's neck and kissed her a dozen times; then Ned hoisted Jack on his shoulders, and the darkness very soon hid him from the poor little sobbing girl whom he had learned to love as a sister.

They went on, twisting in and out of the sand-dunes, by lone country-lanes and hill-paths, never approaching houses until the fresh breeze announced the proximity of the sea.

Ned set the youngster down, and they trotted rapidly towards the shore, upon which could be just distinguished the outline of a boat, with figures moving about it.

"Thare y'are, Master Jack," said Ned, "that's the boat belonging to the 'Three Brothers,' and if everything goes well, she'll put us aboard the 'Phaeton' frigate in less than half an hour."

Everything went well, thanks to the darkness; the "Three Brothers," a smuggling lugger, bent her brown sails gallantly to the breeze, and in less time by far than Ned had mentioned, the survivors of the crew of the "Fancy Lass" were swarming up the steep side of the "Phaeton" frigate, and, ere the moon fairly rose over Calais town, she was off, with five men and "one young gentleman" additional on her books, bound for anywhere that promised fun and fighting.

CHAPTER II.

"HERE'S a lively sort of place for a chap to be condemned to pass his existence in!" growled Lieutenant Garden of the Preventive Service, as he gazed from the window of his official residence at the little Norfolk bay of Portingham, one wild morning in March of the year 1795. "There's fighting and fun going on all over the world, and chances of getting prize-money, and promotion knocking about in every direction, and I'm stuck away here because my wound is too bad for service afloat. Ugh! it's sickening!"

In truth the prospect was not inviting. Sea-wards, grey, tumbling water, half hidden in fog; land-wards, an expanse of barren down unbroken by a single tree, or house, over which the keen north-east wind swept, shaking the little wooden hut and making the Lieutenant's teeth chatter as he stood at the imperfectly closed window.

In reality, however, the appointment of Lieutenant Garden to Portingham had been intended by Government as a compliment to the zeal and bravery of the young gentleman whom we left about to start on his first cruise on board His Majesty's frigate Phaeton, for the place had been long notorious for a desperate gang of smugglers, who had hitherto defied all efforts to detect and capture them, and who had been complained of as a terror to the country for many miles round. So the dangerous and responsible post was offered to Jack Garden, who had received an ugly wound in Lord Howe's action on the glorious First of June of the preceding year; and he accepted it, as he knew very

well that most men, even temporarily incapacitated, were, at this period, when volunteers for naval service were plentiful, usually placed at once on the Retired List.

"Think I'll have a look round," he said at length. "I may as well see how the land lies if I'm to do anything here. I heard there was a village of Portingham, a regular contraband hotbed, and I should like to see it. Hallo! Who's this, I wonder!"

As he spoke a small, round figure, enveloped in a waterproof, sprang off a shaggy, dripping pony, and knocked at the door of the hut.

The Lieutenant opened it.

"Excuse me, sir; excuse me," said his visitor. "I'm the parson of the little church behind the hill. Texter's my name—John Texter—and I heard of your appointment here, and thought I couldn't do better than call and pay my respects at the earliest opportunity. Here's weather, sir; here's weather!"

The Lieutenant suitably acknowledged the little man's courtesy, and emphatically agreed with him on the weather topic; the reverend gentleman, a round-faced, merry-eyed little fellow, in the meanwhile divesting himself of his reeking cloak, and displaying a suit of very old black, with a badge of office in the shape of a very much crumpled and not over-clean neckcloth.

"Take a drop of something warm after your wet ride, Mr. Texter," said the Lieutenant.

"Well, Mr. Garden, if you—well, really, I don't think it will be amiss," replied the Parson.

So Jack poured him out a glass of ship's rum, which the little man sipped and said:

"Not bad, sir, of its kind; not bad for liquor which has paid duty; but wait till you come to my house. I'll give you some that has never paid duty, and I'll ask your opinion afterwards. Why, I should imagine that this is about the only liquor in, or anywhere near Portingham, which has paid duty."

"I suppose so," said Jack smiling.

"But I reckon the good days are numbered now," said the Parson with a sly look, "eh, Lieutenant? Well, well; these gentry have had a good long spell of success. Indeed, hereabouts they do just what they like. They steal the hearts of the lasses, and, in bad seasons, anything they can lay hands on from the lasses'

fathers; and they're utterly reckless and desperate; so much so, that a lot of the landowners hereabouts sent a round-robin to the magistrates at Holt, with the result that you were appointed here."

"Well, I suppose I must take it as a compliment," said Jack, "but I shouldn't have minded a livelier place."

"Lively!" exclaimed the Parson. "Ah! You wait a bit, and you'll find it lively enough."

So they chatted on, until the Lieutenant took a great liking to the little old clergyman, and the latter entertained the same feelings towards him.

"Well, sir," said the Parson, "after all, I've never fulfilled the object of my mission. I came to ask you to make whatever use you like of my poor house. I tell you, when things are not lively at Portingham they're dull, very dull."

"You're very kind," said Jack, "and I shall not fail to avail myself of your invitation. But I was on the point of going out when you came in. Suppose we go together?"

"With all my heart," said the Parson; "you can, or perhaps you can't, imagine what a treat it is to a man who has been buried alive in a place like this for a dozen years to get a talk with a rational being, much less with a gentleman."

"And do you mean that, except yourself, Portingham consists of smugglers?" asked Jack.

"I do," replied the Parson; "there's only one individual with any pretence to refinement. He's my son-in-law that is to be, a young farmer named West—Beeston West he's called—for in these places you find so many people of one name that one has to distinguish between them by a prefix, and he's called Beeston, because he was born at Beeston."

So they sallied forth together. The Lieutenant showed the Parson his arrangement of the little force of twenty men under his command, and the Parson in his turn took him by a short cut up the hills and showed him the church, a quaint little round-towered edifice, built on the very edge of the cliff. From the scaffold-poles about it, the building appeared to be under repair.

"Not much scope for your exertions hereabouts, Mr Texter," said Jack, with a smile.

The Parson shook his head, and said:

"Well, there's plenty of scope, but no encouragement. Indeed, sometimes I think

I'm not doing the right thing in stopping here, for it's a valuable living, and as the church is under repair, and has been for ever so long, I only have a service there once a fortnight, and, to keep my hand in, I'm glad to take duty four miles off. But Olive, that's my daughter—at least I call her my daughter—she likes the place, and the people all swear by her; besides, I'm getting old and rusty, and, perhaps, shouldn't be equal now to the task of superintending actively a large parish."

The rough bridle-path swept over a stiffish hill, and suddenly they entered the village of Portingham, without the smallest previous sign of its existence.

"This is my sheep-fold," said the little Parson, pointing to the jumbled up collection of red-roofed shingled cottages collected round an inn bearing the name and sign of the "Sea Serpent." "And a nice collection of sheep I have, I can tell you. I don't believe there's a man or woman in the place who isn't connected directly or indirectly with smuggling."

"But are you not afraid of being seen in my company?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Afraid! No. Why should I be afraid?" said the Parson. "I don't bother myself with their goings on, and, although this is a parish and there is a church, I must say that they don't bother me much. When any of them are ill, they come to me; when I want any money for the Church or the Parish I go to them, and I get it."

"Well, what I imagined was," said Jack, "that when some of these desperate-looking fellows see you with their natural enemy, they might suspect you."

"Of what? Of being in league with you against them? Not they," said the Parson. "They know very well, that, in the first place, I know very little about them; in the second, that if I had chosen to bring the law down on them, I could have done so long ago; and in the third, that I know it is as much as my life is worth to interfere with them. Why, Mr. Garden, if they thought that I had put you up to any of their dodges, they would no more hesitate to put a bullet into me than they would hesitate to trick you. Hullo! Here's Beeston West! Morning, West!"

This was addressed to a young man of five or six-and-twenty, who was ambling up the village street on a stout, serviceable-looking nag, and who looked like a well-to-do young farmer.

Beeston West reined up and eyed the Lieutenant curiously, but acknowledged

his salutation with sufficient cordiality, and, after a few commonplaces, said that he had business to attend to and went off.

"Well, Mr. Texter," said Jack, "it must be a grand comfort for you to have a daughter to brighten your exile in this out-of-the-way corner of the world."

"Yes," said the little Parson, "I don't know what I shall do without Olive. Yet I suppose I must make up my mind some day to part with her."

"She's going to marry Mr. West, did you not say?"

"Well—he's very fond of her, and it would be a good thing for her if she could only make up her mind to care for him. That's the difficulty, you see. She's not my own child. I'm a bachelor; but when I was at Dymchurch some dozen years ago, a large French vessel was wrecked off Dungeness, and the only soul saved was a little girl, whom I adopted as my own, and who has ever since been a daughter to me."

After this speech, it may be imagined with what curiosity Jack Garden looked forward to seeing the Olive of Norfolk. Truth, he knew, was often stranger than fiction, and, when he considered matters, it appeared by no means improbable that in the adopted daughter of the Portingham Parson, he should discover his little playmate of the old Calais days. It was strange, but although his intimacy with Olive had been simply that of one child with another, he had often thought of her since, and he seemed still to regard her in some sort as his property, for she had been associated with the solitary days of his life, and he could not repress a feeling of resentment that she should be the destined bride of another man.

"Well, Lieutenant," said the Parson, as they emerged from the village and were again on the open downs, "I won't ask you to come in to-night, for her ladyship has gone over to Cleybourne; but come and dine to-morrow night at half-past five."

"That I will," said Jack.

So they shook hands heartily and parted.

CHAPTER III.

IN spite of the Reverend Mr. Texter's friendliness and amiability, there was something mysterious about him, Jack thought. Before coming to Portingham, the Lieutenant had, of course, received his instructions, and had been especially re-

quested to take note that a man's social position was no guarantee of his innocence with regard to contraband matters, and that even coast parsons were not above having dealings with the rogues of their flocks, whose business it was to defraud the Revenue.

He regarded Beeston West with indifferent eyes. If the Norfolk Olive should turn out to be identical with the Olive of old days, he felt sure that there would be a little campaign between him and the Parson's destined son-in-law, unless, of course, matters had gone so far that intrusion on his part would be unwarrantable. The young man seemed right enough; not over-refined, but decidedly superior to the ordinary run of the so-called good folk of these obscure parts. However, he would see Olive soon, and, until then, would indulge in no anticipations and dreams; but the day passed very slowly, and, long before the appointed hour, he had performed his inspection duties and had rigged himself in full uniform, as was then the custom with officers on going into society.

At five o'clock his nag was at the door, and he started. He was surprised to be ushered into a house which was evidently the home of a man of refined and scholarly habits; but he had no eyes for shelves of tempting books; for rare curios; for objects of art; for pictures, or for old furniture—he was longing to have his mind set at rest upon the subject of Olive.

The little Parson received him with open-handed affability, and explained that the mistress of the household, having been busily engaged in preparations for the entertainment during the day, was now engaged on her toilette.

"For," he said, "we are primitive folk here, and, although I flatter myself that my girl is qualified to shine in any society, she is not above lending a hand wherever it is needed about the house."

Presently the door opened, and a tall girl, with sparkling black eyes and raven hair, which fell in natural clusters over a dress of pure white, entered. Jack was astounded. The change wrought had been marvellous; but the fair form before him was assuredly that of the Olive of his boyish days. Olive coloured up, stood irresolute for a moment, then came forward and said:

"Why, Jack!—oh, I mean Lieutenant Garden!"

"And you are Olive of Calais!" ex-

claimed the young officer. "What an extraordinary meeting! I am so glad to see you, Olive! I've thought of you so often. And——"

The little Parson, who had been waiting to introduce the young couple to one another, was amazed.

"Why, bless my heart," he said, "you seem to be old friends! Calling each other Olive, and Jack, and blushing, and stammering, and all that! Where on earth could you have met?"

"Long before I knew you, father dear," said Olive. "But it's a story, and, as dinner is waiting, we will attend to that first and have the story afterwards. Come along, Jack—I mean Lieutenant Garden. We are not children now, are we?"

The meal which followed was the pleasantest Jack had enjoyed for a long time. Indeed, to him it was rather a dream than a reality; and the more he gazed on the bright face and the beautiful figure opposite to him; and listened to the pretty, still slightly-accented talk of the girl whom last he had seen a chubby, square-built, little peasant child; the more he thanked the fate which had placed him at Portingham.

After dinner, when the table had been cleared and decanters brought, Jack related the whole story of his early acquaintance with Olive. He had hardly finished when the door opened and Mr. Beeston West entered the room, and, to Jack's mind at least, seemed to bring a chill with him. The Parson's face became clouded; Olive blushed up and became intent on her plate; and the new arrival, who was evidently surprised at finding a guest, expressed undisguised annoyance in his look. He seemed perfectly at home; nodded carelessly to the Parson; addressed Olive familiarly by her Christian name; threw himself into the easiest chair, and helped himself to wine.

There was a silence for a few moments. West broke it.

"Well, Lieutenant," he said, "they've put you down at a lively spot!"

Jack, resolved to be good-humoured, replied:

"Well, I can't say that I've been in a whirl of excitement yet. You see I've only been here a week; but my friend, the clergyman here, promises me that matters will be lively enough before long."

"Ha! ha!" laughed West, pouring out his third glass of port. "You mean with the runners. Yes, they're lively enough, and it takes lively folk to deal with 'em, I

can tell you, sir. Of course you've been on the work before, Lieutenant?"

"No," replied Jack.

Mr. Beeston West delivered himself of a long whistle, and said:

"By George, then, sir, you'll have to take to the trade smartly. They won't spare you! Eb, Parson! Fancy Grey Stevenson, and Nutty Hawkins, and Long Bob Gresham sparing a Preventive! Ha! ha!"

The young gentleman seemed to be so immensely tickled with the notion that he almost choked himself, in his attempt to digest it and a gulp of port wine at the same time.

"Well, sir," said Jack. "They may be pretty sure that we won't spare them. I rather think that there are some of my boys who will be pretty tough nuts to crack."

Mr. West winked and nodded his head as if he knew better, then got up and placed himself close by Olive. The girl was annoyed and drew her chair away, and Jack Garden felt that his fists were beginning to itch for contact with someone's head.

"I say, Lieutenant," said West, after he had leered in Olive's face for some moments, "we're a rough, unpolished lot down hereabouts, but we ain't altogether without taste. Are we?"

Jack looked round the very comfortable and even luxurious room and endorsed the opinion emphatically.

"No, I don't mean in sticks and pickers and that sort o' thing," said West. "I mean in the matter o' sweethearts. Eh?"

"I haven't the pleasure of knowing your sweetheart, Mr. West," said Jack, whose fists, not content with mere itching, were opening and shutting ominously.

"Oh yes, you do! Why, here she sits! Sweet Olive o' Norfolk, the prettiest lass in the county, and the cruellest, aint you, Olive?" said Mr. West.

"No, I'm not your sweetheart, Mr. West," replied the girl, with quivering lips and flashing eyes. "And I don't know how you can dare to tell such a falsehood before a stranger."

"Well, that's rather good, at any rate!" said West. "Considering that we're as good as engaged, and the Parson says so, and is ready to marry us!"

Jack could not understand this drunken boor's position in the house. The Parson seemed afraid of him; at any rate, he said nothing authoritative to him, but laughed at his jokes; drank with him; and seemed quite content to be treated in an off-hand,

almost insulting manner. At the same time, Jack noticed that he was exceedingly uncomfortable all through his last conversation, fidgetted in his chair, looked sometimes imploringly at West, sighed frequently, and said hardly a word.

This last stroke seemed to remind him that the young man was overstepping the limits, so he said:

"By the way, Beeston, can you give me a few words in the study—about that affair of the beadle, you know?"

"No, no!" hiccupped Mr. West, who was beginning to be palpably influenced by the port. "You want to get me away from my pretty lass here. Tell the truth, old fellow, I shan't mind. Nobody else can have her, that's one comfort, so come on!"

So he reeled out of the room on the Parson's arm.

"My dear Olive," said Jack. "I must call you Olive, although you are a young lady of position—what is the meaning of all this? Why does your father tolerate the conduct of this boor as he does? Who is he? What is he?"

"Oh, Jack—you see I must call you Jack," replied Olive—"I'm so glad that you have come. I have led such a miserable life during the past year; and, although you may think I am saying it just to please you, I have so often thought of those happy days in the old orchard."

"But, Olive, you have had happy days since?"

"Yes, oh yes, very happy days, for father—I call him father—is so good and kind, and always has been. But he is under the thumb of Beeston West, who knows that he can ruin and disgrace poor father, and has said that he will do it unless—unless I become his wife."

"But, Olive, you are not engaged to him?"

"No, Jack. I have made excuses and put it off, but I believe that if you had not come, I should have been obliged to make the sacrifice for father's sake."

"Well but, Olive, this is very strange: that the clergyman of a parish should be literally subject to a man like that, to the extent that he cannot dispose of his daughter's hand as he pleases. Is it some mystery connected with Mr. Texter's life?"

"Yes. To some extent it is, Jack. But I may not say. Your coming here will, I think, save me, if Beeston West is the man he seems to be."

"Well, it's worth while being separated

so long, if it's only for that, Olive. But don't let's talk of unpleasant subjects. Let us talk about what has happened to each of us during fourteen years."

So they talked together so pleasantly and absorbingly that the clock struck eleven when they only seemed to have got half-way through what they had to say, and Jack remembered that his mission to Portingham was not to pass hours away agreeably in conversation with a pretty girl.

Just then the Parson came in, and apologised as best he could for Beeston West's strange behaviour, but in such an awkward manner that both Olive and the Lieutenant guessed that the interview in the study had not been of a pleasant nature.

Jack took his leave soon after, and promised Olive that she should see him very often, although he noticed that the Parson did not press a second invitation.

The Quartermaster reported "all well" on the arrival of the Lieutenant at his head-quarters, and in reply to the officer's question as to whether matters were likely to look lively or not, said:

"Well, sir, if they do other things as queer as they repair their churches, I guess we shall see summat."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Jack.

"Only, sir, they works at 'em until ten o'clock at night. Jim Blackley, what was on the hill beat, says they was 'ard at it not an hour ago, 'ammerin' and tinkerin' about as if the Bishop was a comin' to see em."

CHAPTER IV.

A BEAUTIFUL morning succeeded the storm of the previous day. Olive was in the garden of the Parsonage, noting with delight how Nature, even in this wild district, was preparing the way for spring; listening to the first notes of the cuckoo; marking how busy the rooks already were in the tall trees; spying here and there a violet or a cowslip; and, thinking of the extraordinary event of the day before.

Suddenly she heard a man's step in the shrubbery; her heart beat quick, and her colour rose, but a keen chill swept over her when she beheld Beeston West.

"Good morning, Olive," he said, "I've come to have a little serious talk with you—in fact, to make a last appeal."

Olive looked him straight in the face

but said nothing. West, therefore, continued:

"I'm not like one of the fellows you read of who make long speeches when they ask a girl to marry them. I'm very short in my way of putting it, so I simply ask you, will you be my wife?"

"I think I must have already answered that question more than once, Mr. West," replied Olive. "I cannot think that the love which a woman does not voluntarily give a man is to be extorted from her, or rather driven into her, by the means you propose."

"What means have I proposed?" asked West.

"The threat that, unless I accept you for my husband, you would disgrace and ruin my father," replied Olive. "But, Mr. West, I will not give you the direct answer now. Mind, I don't want to encourage you in the smallest degree, but give me a week to consider."

"Surely you have had time to consider already, Olive," said her suitor.

"Yes, and I want more," said the girl.

West paused, and struck at the grass with his riding whip. Then he muttered something under his breath, and moved slowly away.

Olive went into the house and found the Parson in his study.

"Father," she said, "is it true that you have as good as promised that I shall marry Beeston West?"

"Well, my love," replied Mr. Texter, shifting uneasily in his chair, "it isn't exactly that. I've told him that if he can win you, I'll put no obstacle in his way. But why do you ask now?"

"Because he has just been to me with a final appeal," answered Olive, "and has alluded again to the consequences of my refusal."

"And what did you say, Olive?" asked the Parson.

"I told him I would answer him in a week," replied Olive. "But, father, that was only to gain time. He cannot, and shall not, either disgrace or ruin you."

"But how can you prevent it, my lass?" asked the Parson.

"Never mind, I can and will," answered Olive. "He will come to me in a week and will press me for an answer. I will refuse him and tell him to do his worst."

"And he will do it," said Mr. Texter.

"No, he will not, for I will not let him," said Olive. "You leave it in my hands, father, and you shall see if I do not remove

this intolerable tyranny which makes both of us miserable, and, by so doing, repay you in some measure for your kindness to me during all these years."

"But, my dear child," said the Parson, "if I cannot remove it, how can it be expected that you should?"

"Often, often, father," said the girl, throwing her arms around the old gentleman's neck, "a woman dare do almost more than becomes a man."

The arrival of a Preventive force at hitherto unmolested Portingham produced the greatest excitement amongst all interested in the remunerative traffic of running cargoes, which, as we said before, occupied the entire population of the place.

If Portingham lost its smuggling trade, then Portingham might just as well cease to exist, for there was hardly a skilled labourer in the place, very few agriculturists, and of its fish supply little was known, for the very good reason that Portingham men had done nothing but smuggle from time immemorial. Very desperate plans were made by men who were known to be the most desperate of any of their calling; but it had been proved time out of number that no success gained against such a foe as Government could ever be anything more than temporary, and that it was a foe that showed neither quarter during the contest nor mercy after it.

It was at the "Sea Serpent" inn that the desperate fellows met to discuss their desperate plans, and although the "Sea Serpent" rarely lacked for patronage, never had its walls been so crowded as during the fortnight following Lieutenant Garden's establishment on the cliffs about the village, and never before in the memory of the oldest inhabitant had so many as four luggers been seen lying idle at the little wharf which was known by the dignified appellation of Portingham Quay.

At about eight o'clock in the evening of the day on which the meeting between Olive and Beeston West, above described, took place, Olive, closely wrapped in a long cloak, slipped out from the Parsonage whilst the Reverend Mr. Texter was what he termed "engaged" in his study—or was, in other words, enjoying his usual after-dinner nap. The path from the Parsonage to Portingham village was lonely enough at midday, when the sun was shining and skies were blue, so that there

was no danger to be apprehended from molestation even after dark. Moreover, much as the Portingham folk regarded with suspicion all who were not of their own social and commercial status, there was not one amongst the worst and most abandoned of them who had not a good word to say for Olive. Indeed, in a place like Portingham, where naturally there was no medical man, it would be hard to say what could have become of the local sick and wounded but for the tender care and ever-active kindness of the girl.

Prominent amongst those who regarded her rather as an angel than as an ordinary being, was Mrs. Dulcimer, landlady of the "Sea Serpent"—a tall, large-boned woman of the old Danish East-country stock, the hardness of whose fist was only equalled by the roughness of her tongue, and who ruled her wild patrons as no man could have ruled them.

Her surprise may be imagined when, just as the distant chime of the little church on the hill tolled half-past eight, the figure of Miss Olive presented itself in her little bar.

"Goody grace, Miss Olive, bor!" she exclaimed. "Is it you out at such a time o'night? Why, who is it that's sick now? Surely Mother Trotter——"

"Nobody's sick, Mrs. Dulcimer," said Olive. "At least nobody that I know of. I want you to show me the room where the gentlemen meet of an evening."

"Lor' grant me, Miss Olive, bor!" exclaimed Mrs. Dulcimer, "what do'ee want to go there fur? A young leddy, the likes of you, can't go troo to them, not likely!"

"But I have a special reason for going, Mrs. Dulcimer," said Olive; "so please show me, as every moment is valuable."

"Well-a-day! In coorse you knows your own business best, bor," said the landlady. "An' it ain't for me to interfere. It's nummer ten, with a diamond pane atop of the panel."

Olive followed the dark, narrow passage, and guided by the sound of strong voices in earnest discussion, stopped opposite Number ten.

She opened the door and stood for a few seconds gazing through a thick cloud of tobacco smoke at a strange scene.

A score of weather-beaten, flaxen-haired giants were seated along a table or lounging over the mantel-shelf, listening to the words addressed to them by a grey-haired veteran who was standing at the head of the table. Most of them were supplied

with liquor of one kind or another, generally port wine, which was drawn from a genuine Peninsular cask, and all were smoking. There were one or two handsome faces amongst them; but to the physiognomist, the prevalent type was desperate, careless, light-hearted villainy; and indeed there were few amongst them whose hands were unstained with the blood of their fellow creatures, and not one who would have hesitated to shoot a Preventive or Press-gang officer.

And yet the sudden entrance of Olive produced a strange effect on them. More than one rose from his seat and pulled his forelock by way of salute; the uplifted fist of the speaker descended gently to the table; faces, which habitually wore a scowl, relaxed into comparative amiability of expression; and a dead silence ensued.

Olive broke the silence with her fresh, ringing voice.

"I've come to warn you," she said. "Move everything that you have from—you know where. Begin to-night, if possible; but get it done within a week."

Then she disappeared as suddenly as she had come, and never stopped until she was once more under the Parsonage roof.

CHAPTER V.

DURING the following week, Jack Garden found it impossible to give as much time as he would have liked to the society of Olive. On three separate occasions the news reached him that large cargoes of contraband goods had been safely disposed of in the neighbouring country. This vexed and astonished him beyond measure; firstly, because as a new broom he was anxious to sweep well; and secondly, because he was conscious of having taken every possible precaution, and was satisfied that, so far as he and his men were concerned, Portingham was closed to smuggling.

There was but one solution of the mystery, and this was that the smugglers had a secret depot for goods already run ashore before he came, which he had not discovered. Yet it appeared to him that he could hardly have failed to note the transport of such a large quantity of goods from Portingham inland; for there was but little farming thereabouts, and the appearance of a string of carts would certainly have excited attention.

So he sent to the nearest Preventive

station for extra men, as he deemed his own force insufficient for the purpose of watching both land and sea, and resolved to set to work to fathom the mystery.

At the expiration of the week of grace, stipulated for by Olive with Beeston West, that gentleman made his appearance at the Parsonage.

Olive was, as before, in the garden, and her suitor might well gaze with admiration at the tall, light-robed figure, set off against the dark background of hardy shrubs; the black curls tossed in the breeze; the cheeks radiant with health; every feature, every movement full of grace and ease.

"Olive," he said, "I have come to learn my fate at your lips. Will you be my wife?"

"No, Mr. West, I will not!" the girl replied in a firm, low voice.

Beeston West stared amazed. He had flattered himself that the week's grace asked by Olive meant capitulation on her part.

"Is that your final, unalterable decision?" he asked.

"Yes, it is," replied Olive.

"There is no chance of your thinking it over?"

"None whatever."

"Then you accept the alternative," said West, his face white with suppressed anger and mortification, "disgrace and ruin to the man who has been a father to you?"

"I do," said Olive.

"Then," said West, with a burst of his anger, "I suppose I ought to thank my stars that I am not doomed to be united to so heartless and ungrateful a woman!"

Olive smiled, and passed slowly into the house.

Beeston West watched her retreating figure, delivered himself of a thunder of execrations, turned on his heel, and strode out of the garden.

He took the straight path leading to Jack Garden's hut, and in less than an hour was at the door.

The Lieutenant was holding a consultation with his Quartermaster over a map of the country around Portingham.

"Well, Mr. West?" he said, rolling up the map, and motioning to the sailor to retire.

"Can you give me a few minutes on business?" asked West.

"I can," replied Jack. "Sit down; here's a pipe. What will you take to drink? Ship's rum, or port wine?"

Beeston West preferred port wine at eleven o'clock in the morning, and swallowed a glass with great relish.

"Mr. Garden," he said, "you have come here to put a stop to smuggling, and I suppose you think it will be a tolerably easy job?"

"No, indeed I don't," said Jack; and was on the point of alluding to the three successful runs of the week, when he remembered that his instructions had been not to trust anyone. "On the contrary, I am prepared for a very tough job."

"Yes; you would better describe it as an impossible job," said his visitor.

"No." British officers do not like to admit that word into their dictionaries," said Jack.

"Well," said Beeston West, "if I tell you that it is well-nigh impossible, you may believe it, for you have probably heard that, although I have nothing more to do with the smugglers than the replenishing of my cellar from their stock, I am up to all their dodges."

The Lieutenant bowed his head.

"Well now, before I come to the object of my visit," West continued, "I will put a question to you. In your position here as Preventive officer, don't you consider it your first duty to carry out your instructions, no matter whom that execution of duty would affect?"

"Yes, sir; I suppose I do," replied Jack.

"Very well. Now, if from the information I give you," said West, "you can stamp out Portingham smuggling, but at the same time bring disgrace and ruin on one who is your friend, and at whose house you are freely welcomed, would you sacrifice private feelings for public interests?"

Jack now remembered, for the first time, what Olive had told him of the influence exercised by Beeston West over the Parson; guessed that his visitor had been rebuffed in his suit; and saw that the clever rogue had got him into a corner. He had to fend the question off with another.

"Mr. West, you speak very plainly. I must imitate you. Am I to understand that if I act upon the information you say you can give me, Mr. Texter will be disgraced and ruined?"

"That is no answer, Lieutenant," said West.

"Well," said Jack, "I should require to have very clear proof that a gentleman of Mr. Texter's position was in any way con-

nected with the smugglers before I could proceed to act upon it."

"You can have no better proof than the evidence of your own eyes," said West. "If you will make an appointment to meet me to-night at ten o'clock, I will give you all the proofs you can wish for. If you refuse to avail yourself of my information——"

"Which I certainly do," put in Jack.

"Very well; then I shall report the matter to the officer at Cleybourne," said West, "and he will get the credit of stopping Portingham smuggling, and you will be censured and punished for culpable neglect."

"Mr. West," said Jack, who was rapidly losing his calmness, "I know my duty sufficiently well not to require the assistance of others; if, indeed you could find an officer who would, as it were, poach on the preserves of another."

"All right," said West. "I request you to meet me at ten o'clock to-night, at the old toll-bar on the Sholt Road."

"And I refuse to walk into a trap," said Jack.

"Then I shall go straight to Sir Roger Iddison, the Justice of the Peace, and I shall inform him that you have distinctly refused to do your duty as a Preventive officer, simply because you don't want to ruin a man after whose daughter you are running."

Jack felt inclined to help Beeston West out of the hut with an energetic kick, but restrained himself. Scarcely had West gone, than the Quartermaster entered with a grave face, saluted, and said:

"Please, sir, forty kegs of brandy, ten packages of Flanders lace, and twenty barrels of tobacco, sold at North Wright-ham the day afore yesterday."

Jack Garden jumped up with a strong expression of anger.

"That makes four in seven days!" he exclaimed. "Well, this can't go on. I must do my duty. You see that fellow who has just gone out, there! He's going up the white path. Run after him and tell him I want to see him."

The man hurried off, and Jack was left to reflections which, as might be expected, were not of a pleasant nature.

How was he to act? If a fifth cargo were run, he would become a public laughing-stock, and run a risk not only of being superseded at Portingham, but of being requested to send in his papers of resignation to the Admiralty. On the other hand if what Beeston West said was true, he

might stop Portingham smuggling, but at the same time bring disgrace and ruin on the old guardian of the girl he loved best in the world. It was certainly a hard position to be in; but he decided that duty called him at any rate to make a trial of Beeston West's faith.

The Quartermaster soon reappeared with Beeston West.

"Mr. West," said Jack, "I have reconsidered my decision. I will meet you to-night at ten, at the place you named."

"Come! come! That's talking sense," put in West.

"But wait," said Jack. "I shall go armed myself, and with as many men as can be spared for the duty. If I find that there is a trap laid, I put a bullet through your head and will risk the consequences."

"Do so. I'm agreeable," said West. "Ten o'clock, then!"

Jack nodded and gave instructions that as many men as could be spared from night duty should parade at half-past nine that night, armed with cutlasses, muskets, and pistols.

By the time appointed the blue skies had become masses of heavy, rolling, black clouds; and for the pleasant spring temperature of the morning was substituted a bitter north-east wind, accompanied with sheets of driving rain.

The men shuddered as they quitted their warm quarters and fell in outside the Lieutenant's hut; but when he explained the errand they were on, they would have raised a cheer but for tactical reasons, for the news of the four successful runs during the week had exasperated them as much as it had their commanding officer.

Then with a steady tramp over the boulders and loose stones of the rough hill path, they went towards the old toll-gate on the Sholt Road.

Beeston West was there punctually at the appointed time. He was smoking a cigar, and seemed in the highest spirits. Placing himself at Jack's side he directed the movements of the little column, and led it to the little church on the cliff brow.

At the churchyard gate a halt was called, and the Preventive men were directed to creep in and take up their positions amongst the tombstones immediately about the door under the belfry.

"I rayther think I begin to twig the meanin' of all them repairs they've been so precious busy at of late," said the Quartermaster. "You may take your

davy, sir, that all them carts full o' scaffold poles, and ladders, and buildin' fixings, 'ad somethink else in 'em at the same time."

"Now, Lieutenant," said West, "if you're ready, I am." He went to the door under the belfry, opened it, took a ship's lantern from a seat, lighted it, and set it on the stones of the belfry.

"One of the neatest hiding-places you could imagine," he said, smiling as he stooped on one knee, and began to tug at a ring in the memorial stone of a mediæval admiral. "Goes all the way under the church, and leads out on the cliff's face. Used to be a burial-place when Portingham was a big place, and I've heard that when the smugglers first took possession of it, they tumbled four hundred coffins and skeletons out into boats and sank them at sea. Every now and then bits are washed ashore now, and simple folks think there's been a wreck somewhere, little thinking that they've come from Portingham crypt."

By this time he had loosened the stone. "Now, Mr. Garden, will you go down? Six steps, and there you are!" said West.

"Not alone, thank you," said Jack.

"Very well, bring the whole crew then, if you're afraid of an old tomb," said West.

"No, Mr. West, I'm not afraid of that," said Jack. "But it's as well to be on one's guard when dealing with gentlemen who don't hesitate to do mortal injuries to others when their own affairs are a little crossed. Quartermaster, tell off half-a-dozen men."

The men entered, and they descended the weird, dimly-lighted burial-place.

Beeston West led the way. Suddenly he uttered a cry of vexation, and ran hither and thither, as if hunting for something.

"Well, there's precious little here!" said Jack, penetrating the angles and recesses of the vault with the rays of his lantern. "It's empty, man!"

No one but himself knew the glad, buoyant feeling which filled him at that moment. Of course he saw very clearly that goods of a very unecclesiastical nature had but recently been removed, for on the walls were the distinct outlines of cases, and a board had been left behind with the word "Nantes" upon it. But there was nothing by which to convict the Parson.

He turned to Beeston West, who was standing the very picture of surprise and mortification, and said:

"Well, Mr. West, I don't think we're

any further on our way than when we started."

"Yes, we are," replied West angrily; "the place was chock-full this day last week, for I bought a case of claret from a sample tasted here. Someone has turned informer."

"Serves you right," said Jack. "I'm delighted that we can find nothing; and, mind you, Mr. West, there will be no more smuggling at Portingham."

"And no more repairin' of the church, sir," said the Quartermaster.

They ascended the steps again. Beeston West was leading, and turned into the churchyard first. He had scarcely set his foot outside, when the report of a musket rang through the air and he fell dead. Instantly, the Preventive men sprang up; but although they searched every nook and corner of the churchyard, they could find no one, and they knew that he had met the fate of a traitor at the hands of the desperate men whose occupation in Portingham was now gone.

Jack locked up the church, placed Beeston West's body on an improvised stretcher, and the detachment marched to the village. Every window was lighted, and the narrow street was crowded with men and women; but not a sound was heard as the little procession halted at the door of the "Sea Serpent," and Beeston West's body was borne inside to await the inquest.

Jack dismissed the men to their quarters, and went straight to the Parsonage. He found Mr. Texter and Olive seated together in the little study, and told them all that had taken place.

When he had concluded, the Parson said:

"Well, Mr. Garden, of course you must think me a double-faced old hypocrite, but when I tell you that on my arrival here, twelve years ago, I was given the alternative by the smugglers of being driven out of my living by persecution, or of allowing to them the privilege they had enjoyed from time immemorial of hiring the church

vaults as a store-house, you can understand how I, a poor man with no professional interest, was likely to decide. I elected to remain, although I knew that, if the conditions of my holding the living were known to the Bishop, I should be disgraced and ruined. Then Mr. Beeston West came on the scene, and fell in love with Olive, and decided that, unless I let her marry him, he would bring the sacrilege before the Bishop—which he would have done, for although rough and rude, he was well connected. And so there it is, Lieutenant. I could have wished that less violent means had been employed to rid me of my persecutor, yet I feel sure that Beeston West would have done no good had he lived, and I am sure that my poor Olive has been spared a life of misery."

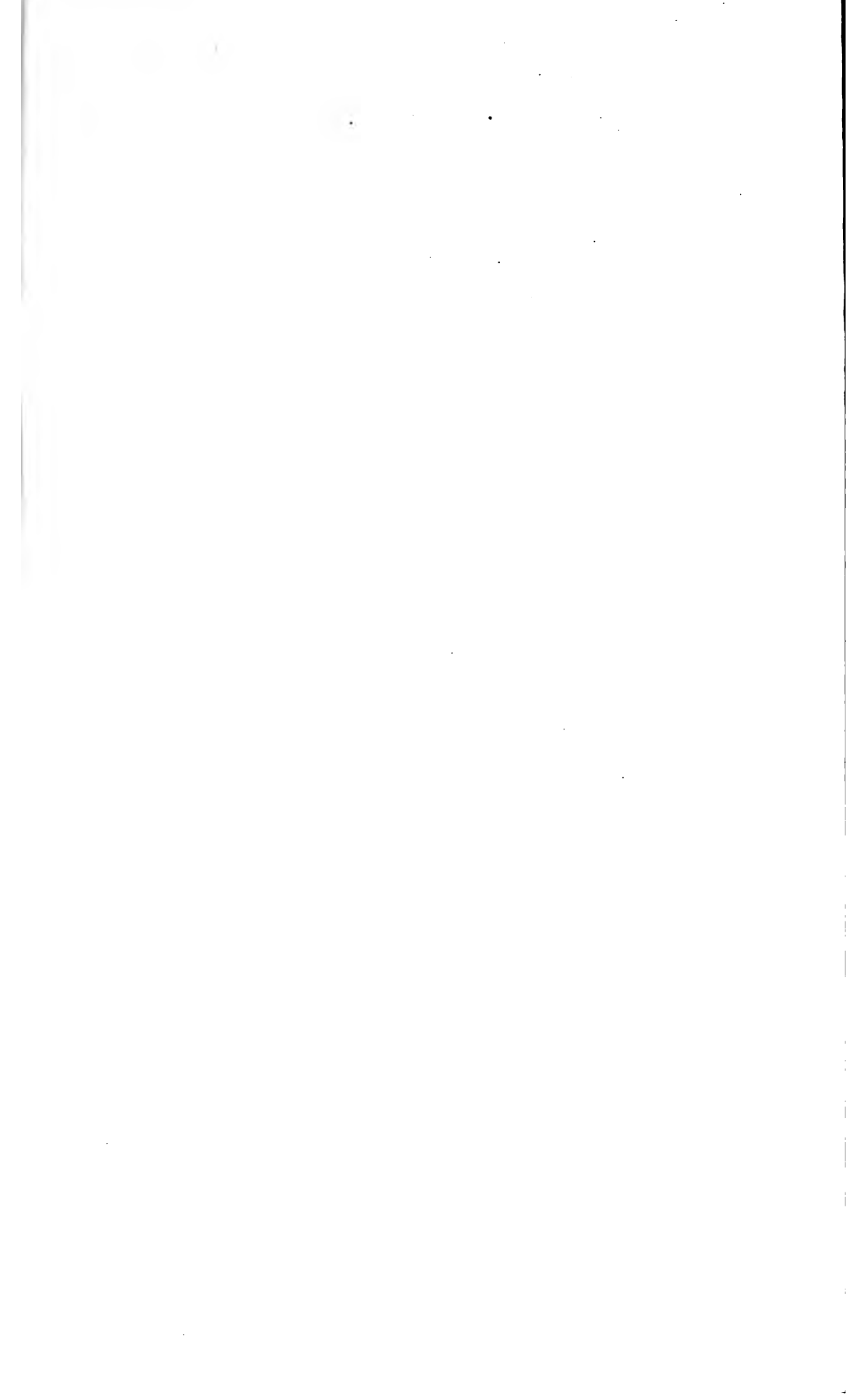
The man who had fired the shot which killed Beeston West was never detected, although the officers of justice prosecuted enquiries actively in the village and neighbourhood. But for a long time there was not a case of smuggling known at Portingham, and its natives not only took to honest trade themselves, but so extended the local cod and lobster fisheries, that strangers were attracted; new houses of decent appearance sprang up; and the obscure, dirty little fishing-village, famous hitherto for the turbulent character of its inhabitants, became a thriving, industrious, sober little port.

Portingham Church underwent a genuine restoration, and the first ceremony celebrated between its walls after it had been formally thrown open for public service, was the wedding of Jack, now Commander Garden, with Olive; and not the least attractive amongst the wedding-presents was a silver centre-piece, subscribed for entirely by the ex-smugglers and their families.

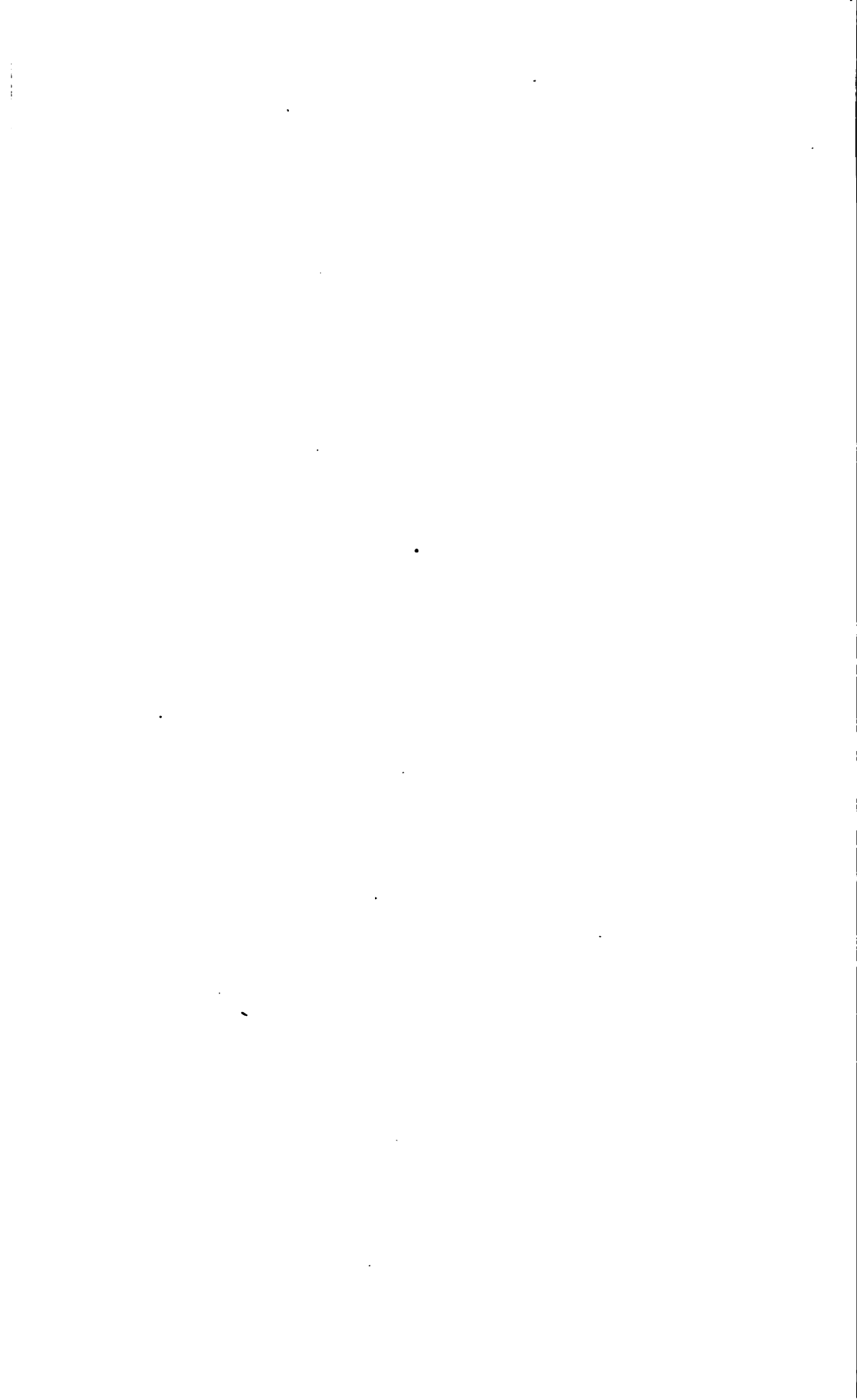
Jack's wound troubled him more than he anticipated, so that he resigned his commission in a few years, and settled down at Portingham as a country gentleman of independent fortune.

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MAR 24 1892

APR 20 1893

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QUEENSLAND

